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IN THE MIDDLE AGES



JEWS IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

BY

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF MY WIFE SHOSHANA

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PREFACE

As in my previous books (*The Book on the heqdēsh* [Jewish pious foundations], Leiden 1976; *The Tustaris*, Tel Aviv 1981; *Palestine during the First Muslim Period* [Tel Aviv 1983] and its vol. I: *A History of Palestine (634-1099)* [Cambridge 1992]), this book is also primarily based on documents from the Geniza. 846 such documents are included in extenso in three volumes of this book's Hebrew version. These documents are mentioned here by their numbers, in bold type.

In my Preface to *A History of Palestine*, the reader will find information about the Geniza and its importance, as well as references to more detailed descriptions of this vast and endless historical treasure. There I also raise the contribution made by earlier scholars to the deciphering of these documents and their value in the clarification of the various issues with regard to the history of the Jewish people in the Islamic countries in the early Middle Ages. The extensive notes which accompany the discussions appearing below include mentions (alas, perennially insufficient) of studies written in recent generations; they set forth *variae lectiones*, reservations, and disputes on matters of content—which, however, are not in the least intended to detract from the work of the earlier scholars, without whom we would be hopelessly groping in the dark today. Indeed, I must assume that, at times, the versions cited by others are preferable to my own. Further, I sincerely hope that scholars in subsequent generations will make a more profound investigation of the documents published by me and will continue to improve and facilitate their reading. After all, the writing in most of these documents is extremely cursive, with many faded places, and even the translations may be justly subjected to criticism. “Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults” (Ps. 19:12). To a great degree, clarification of the issues set forth in this book has resulted from the constant debate and confrontation which I have maintained with rather large groups of students. Their questions, their comments, the papers they have written and submitted—all of these have helped me to refine my understanding and my outlook, and have confirmed the saying of the Sages: “And from my students [I have learned] more than from anyone”.

Appearing at the beginning of this book are two discussions with regard to the Jews of the Arabian Peninsula; my readers, of course, will be able to obtain a clear and continuous general overview of the history of the Jews of that area (most of whom settled in the North—that is, in Ḥijāz) from various books dealing with the history of early Islam,

to which I refer quite often in this book. The first discussion deals with the origin of the Jews of Yathrib, or al-Madīna. The discussion is based on Arab traditions, but also on some talmudic sources. In fact, there is an unusual and rather rare degree of compatibility between these two types of sources, leading to the conclusion that the Jewish population of Hijāz at the time of inception of Islam comprised two components: the descendants of the refugees from the revolts in Palestine, and Arab tribes or clans who drifted toward Judaism and eventually became converted in the course of the generations which preceded Islam. The second discussion deals with the document known as *kitāb al-umma*, or “the Constitution of al-Madīna”. In that discussion, I seek to prove that the document, as copied by an anonymous hand from among the original Arab compilers is undeniably authentic, except for the title which was given to it by those compilers, which indicates that the document constitutes a sort of contract between the Prophet of Islam and the Jews. I present a detailed analysis of the sections of this document, which has already been subjected to several contemporary investigations by renowned scholars; as has already been observed before my time, there is no compliance whatsoever between that title and the contents of the document itself. Nonetheless, that title has constituted a basis for the various traditions about the existence of a treaty between Muḥammad and the Jews—a treaty which the Jews breached, thereby incurring punishment. Admittedly, the covenant between Muḥammad and the clans which joined the Muslim community (the *umma*) includes sections which concern the Jews; the purpose of these sections, however, is only to accustom those adherents to the covenant to the idea that the Jews are wrongdoers (*ẓālimūn*) and that they must be forced to participate in the expenses of the war which was about to break out between the Muslims and the people of Makka, the Qurashites.

As has already been noted by Jacob Mann, the period of the Babylonian geonim—centuries of weighty importance to the history of the Jewish people—runs parallel to the establishment of a new religion, Islam, and to the astounding rise of the Arabs to the center of human history. The mere mention of the names of major Jewish communities, such as Baghdad, Baṣra, Ramla, Fustāt, Qayrawān, Fās—all of them cities founded by Arabs—suffices to illuminate the close relationship between the history of Islam and the history of the Jews in that period. Moreover, there can be no doubt that, throughout the generations described below, only a minority of the Jewish Diaspora dwelt in Christian lands, whereas the great majority thereof was concentrated in the Islamic countries, where the Jews maintained their principal centers of learning, from where learning was spread to Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora (sections 101-135 below).

A source of great value to the history of the Jews in those times is the geonic literature. From the standpoint of historic research, this literature is divided into two categories. One category consists of literary works written by, or under the close influence of, the geonim; this includes the responsa literature, which has been preserved in the various Jewish communities. Only a few of these responsa survived long enough to be printed, starting in the sixteenth century; by that time, they had passed through the hands of numerous copiers. Because it was halachic issues which most interested Jews of those generations, not many of the details of interest to historians—dates, names of persons, places, and the like—have survived; moreover, in many cases, the copiers totally omitted the queries, leaving only the responsa. The second category is the responsa literature preserved in the Cairo Geniza, whose wording is generally more reliable and closer to the questions which the geonim were actually asked and the answers which they provided, and which, ipso facto, have a greater historic value. Naturally, the historic value of the letters written by geonim—by contrast to their responsa in halachic matters—is even greater. The reference here is to the letters written by the geonim to the Jewish communities in the Diaspora and their figures. Still, among the letters preserved in the Geniza, some are truly authentic—that is, written in the actual hand of the gaon or the contemporary scribe of the yeshiva—while others are copies made in later generations, but still within the geonic period. An excellent example of the latter category is provided by the letters, documents and treatises copied by a Babylonian, Joseph b. Jacob, who was the son of Jacob *rōsh bē rabbānān*, mentioned later in this book. The son, Joseph, also known as Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*, settled in Fustat, composed halachic treatises and copied writings of the geonim in the first half of the thirteenth century.¹

Among the geonic writings which provide historic information, three are worthy of mention here: *sefer ha-galui* by Saadia Gaon; *akhbār baghdād* by Nathan ha-Kohen b. Isaac the Babylonian; and the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon. The *sefer ha-galui* belongs to the polemic writings of Saadia Gaon, written during the period of his disputes, such as his letters which constituted part of the dispute over the calendar. It is obvious to us that the number of polemic letters and treatises (and the copies thereof) increased drastically during these periods of

¹ See Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 457f.; on Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*, see *idem*, *Jews*, II, 310f.; Abramson, *Sinai*, 48 (1983/4), 204f.; *idem*, *Kiryat sefer*, 26 (1949/50), 72; Goitein, *Sidre ḥinnūkh*, 148; and the articles of A. Scheiber: *Lōw Mem. Vol.*, Hebrew part, 158ff.; *Tarbiz*, 33 (1963/4), 369ff.; *Kiryat sefer*, 44 (1968/9), 546ff.; *AO* (Hung.), 23 (1970), 115ff.; *Kiryat sefer*, 48 (1972/3), 152ff. See a part of Hayy Gaon's responsum: TS G 2.67, ed. Friedman, *Ribbūy n.*, 169ff., which is in the handwriting of Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*; in TS 12.826 we find several times his signature, *yōsef rōsh ha-seder b. ya'eqōv rōsh kallā b. 'alī rōsh ha-qāhāl*, of blessed memory; in Mosseri, V, 291 there are fragments of his commentary to the Talmud; and see also below, sec. 275.

dispute, as did the probability that some of them would survive and be preserved to this day. The fragments from the *sefer ha-galui*, along with what remains of the replies written by Saadia Gaon's opponents—that is, the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, and the gaon Aaron ha-Kohen—constitute an extremely significant historic source for the history of the Jews of Babylonia in the tenth century.

Akhhār baghdād is the name assumed to have been given to a compendium of details on Babylonia, its yeshivot and the exilarchs who lived and worked there, as well as other Babylonian personages, recorded from the tales of a Baghdadi Jew, Nathan ha-Kohen b. Isaac, one of the Babylonian scholars, who came—as we may assume—to Qayrawān. In this day and age, this source is principally known according to the version printed by Neubauer. In the first part of the story, which Neubauer entitled *sefer ʿōlām zūṭā* (a brief history of the world) under paragraph C, we find information on the Babylonian yeshivot, with emphasis on the superiority of Sura over Pumbedita; it is obvious that the author himself was a Suran. Isaac Halevy believed that this section, which is located before the words “and what was stated by Nathan ha-Kohen b. Isaac, the Babylonian”, was not actually written by Nathan the Babylonian, but is taken from the introduction to the Talmud written by Samuel, the Spanish nagid; on the other hand, both Weiss and Grätz believed that Nathan the Babylonian was the author of this section as well, and Ginzberg proved that it was Samuel the nagid who copied from Nathan the Babylonian. The mysterious personality of Nathan the Babylonian has given rise to various hypotheses; Grätz believed that he was one of the captives mentioned by Abraham Ibn Daʿūd in his Book of Tradition (the one whose name was not mentioned by Ibn Daʿūd), and that he came from Narbonne in the South of France. However, according to the details contained in his story, he obviously lived before the time of the four captives, and he was a Babylonian, rather than a Spaniard. It is correct to consider the story, as we have it in its Hebrew version, as a homogeneous work, which has not been completely preserved; the writer, who recorded the story as told by Nathan the Babylonian, repeatedly noted the identity of the narrator, and it appears that such a mention also came before the said introductory fragment, although it has not been preserved (as the beginning of that fragment has not been preserved).ⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱ The dispute over the calendar: see the discussion and references in Gil, *Hist.*, 562-569, and see below, secs. 142-143, on the Babylonian aspects of the dispute, and the letters 5-8. *Sefer ha-galui*: Geiger, *JZWL*, 9 (1871), 173ff. Neubauer, *JQR*, 4 (1891/2), 492ff. In 1892 Harkavy edited a large fragment from the *Sefer ha-galui* and pertinent documents, with an introduction and commentaries, see *Zikkārōn la-r.*, V, 133ff. See more discussions and editions of texts: Poznanski, *JQR*, 8 (1895), 686f.; Harkavy, *JQR*, 12:532, 1899/1900; Lambert, *REJ*, 40:84, 260, 1900; Margoliouth, *JQR*, 2 (1899/1900), 502; Bacher, *Exposit. Times*, 11:454, 1899/1900; Stern, *Melilah*, 5:331, 1956. The story of Nathan the Babylonian, see: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 77ff. The fragment under dispute: *ibid.*, continued on p. 78, to 10th line from bottom. See Halevy, *Dōrōt ha-r.*, III (2), 75f.; Weiss, *Dōr d. we-d.*, IV, 13 n. 3; Grätz, *Gesch.*,

This story recounted by Nathan the Babylonian, as printed by Neubauer within the framework of *seder ʿōlām zūṭā*, is taken from the version given in a manuscript which had been in the possession of A. Epstein and was lost in the Holocaust. The copying of that manuscript was completed on 19 Shevat AM 5269, 10 January 1509, in Salonika, and the scribe was Isaac Apomado. Samuel Shulam included the story of Nathan the Babylonian in his edition of the *sefer ha-yūḥasin* of Abraham Zacuto, Constantinople 1566, according to another manuscript, whose details are not known to us; this printing as well was used by Neubauer. In 1904, Friedländer published a large section (originating from the Geniza) of the Arabic original of the story, preceding it with a detailed introduction in which he proved, inter alia, that the compilation was, in fact, originally written in Arabic. Friedländer also mentioned the fact that the story of Neṭīrā, which had been published by Harkavy in the *Berliner Jub. Vol.*, was part of that same compilation, which the Arabic original refers to as *akhbār baghdād*. We cannot determine the exact nature of the relationship between the story told by Nathan the Babylonian of the yeshivot of Babylonia and the introduction to the Talmud. It should be noted that there are two important innovations in this era. One of them is the identification of the copier of the passage located in the Geniza; Goitein found, based on the shape of the handwriting, that the copier was Nathan b. Samuel he-Havēr, 'ha-Nezer', who was the scribe of the yeshiva in Fustat in the first half of the twelfth century. The second innovation lies in the reasonable argument advanced by M. Margaliot to the effect that the introduction to the Talmud was not written by Samuel, the Spanish nagid, but by Samuel b. Ḥananiah, the leader of the Jews of Fustat and contemporary of the Nezer; in fact, Samuel b. Ḥananiah also bore the title of nagid. This being the case, we may assume that the manuscripts brought with them to Egypt by immigrants from the Maghrib included the original of the compilation *akhbār baghdād*, which had been recorded in the mid-tenth century as told by Nathan ha-Kohen b. Isaac the Babylonian, and which was copied about 200 years thereafter by the 'Nezer', Nathan b. Samuel, and inspired the nagid Samuel b. Ḥananiah in his writing of the introduction to the Talmud. We have no definitive answer with regard to the question of the time at which *akhbār baghdād* was written. It says that Isaac b. Neṭīrā was 27 years old at the time of its writing; his father, Neṭīrā, died in 916, meaning that the compilation must have been written at some time prior to 943. On the other hand, the story

V, 541f.; Epstein, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 169-172; Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 45. See the introduction to the Talmud by Samuel *ha-nāgīd*, in the tractate *Berākhot* (Vilna edition) in the additions, 3bff. Friedländer, *JQR*, 17 (1904/5), 762, thought as Halevy did, that the opening fragment is a distinct source, not from Nathan the Babylonian, but translated into Hebrew by the same translator, who collected the fragments and gave them a common framework; and that the Hebrew of the fragment is similar to that of the rest of the text.

recounted by Nathan the Babylonian extends up to the appointment of Khalaf b. Sarjāda, who was Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, as gaon of Pumbedita, which took place in 943. Nathan also cites details on Sahl b. Neṭīrā, who was murdered in 938 (section 366 below), and speaks of him as though he were still living. It is possible to excuse this by assuming that the news of the death of Sahl had not yet reached Nathan in Qayrawān. In any event, it appears that *akhbār baghdād* should be dated during the early 940s.ⁱⁱⁱ

The third source, the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon, has already been extensively discussed; the document and its various versions are described in detail in B.M. Lewin's introduction to the edition of the *Letter*. Lewin's view with regard to the sorting of the various versions of the *Letter* by countries—a 'French' text and a 'Spanish' text—has been discussed by Elbogen, who, while he admitted that it was possible to distinguish between two groups of versions, rejected Lewin's view entirely. The group referred to by Lewin as 'Spanish' consists of versions which included marginal notes and interpretations, with a relatively high degree of freedom even with regard to the original text. On the other hand, it is a rather well-known fact that the versions belonging to the 'French' group are generally similar to what we find in those fragments of the *Letter* which have been preserved among the Geniza manuscripts, and that those fragments are certainly the closest to the original, from the standpoint of the respective dates of their copying as well. It is also worthwhile to note the possibility—first mentioned by Mann—that Sherira Gaon himself wrote about his historic *Letter* in one of his letters to Jacob b. Joseph b. 'Awkal, which has been preserved in the Geniza: ".... And here we have written answers to the wonderful and precious questions asked by our Lord and Master Jacob he-Ḥavēr, may God preserve him".

Large portions of my work are based on my collection of letters from the Geniza; these include the Babylonian letters, 101 in number (among them the letters by the *nesī'im*, members of the families of the later exilarchs), and 745 letters and documents belonging to merchants up to the end of the eleventh century. Noteworthy in this context is a statement by Goitein, who stressed the importance of "comparative study of the entire exchange of letters between Tunisia and the East... which still requires a great deal of preparatory work"—and who, if not

ⁱⁱⁱ See Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, in the introduction, p. X; Marx, *Zfhw*, 5 (1905), 54f.; *idem*, *Seder 'Olām*, xiii, Steinschneider, *Geschichtslit.*, 21f., 174; no. 16; Schwarz, *Hebr. Handschr.*, 16f., no. 31. Cohen, in his Hebrew introduction to Ibn Da'ud's *Book of Trad.*, 17; M. Ben-Sasson, in the *H.H. Ben-Sasson Mem. Vol.*, 162. See also: Coronel, in the introduction to *Ḥamishshā qunṭr.*; Poznanski, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/30, 400; the Arabic original: see 11, 12, and the references in their preambles. The identification of the copyist of the Arabic fragment: Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 513, where he noted that the same copyist also copied another fragment, see the preamble to 12; see on the author of the introduction to the Talmud: Margoliot, *Hilehkōt ha-nāgīd*, 68ff.; Isaac b. Neṭīrā's age: 11, b, ll. 23-24.

Goitein, did such a vast amount of preparatory work! It was he, in his detailed articles and his monumental work on the Mediterranean society, who prepared the foundation on which I base my edition of the merchants' letters and their documents and the discussion resulting therefrom. Some of them—especially the earlier ones—also include information on the Babylonian yeshivot and their contacts with the Diaspora. Most of the information contained therein, however, obviously relates to economic life; they also shed light on the general framework within which the merchants lived and worked, their places of residence and the events which characterized their lifetimes. Many of the topics related to these merchants have already been exhaustively discussed in Goitein's works; the discussions below will focus on the merchants themselves, their personalities, their families and the relationships between them. A series of articles, which are presently being prepared by me for publication, will discuss additional families of merchants, clarifying in greater detail the types of goods in which they dealt, and providing information on their community activities, as part of the general discussion of community life, in light of the letters in this collection and additional sources. They will also include clarification of various terms to be found in those letters, the outlook expressed therein with regard to contemporary events, especially in Egypt and the Maghrib, additional comments on the ways and means of trade in those times, and additional details on Jewish localities in the Maghrib and in Egypt.^{iv}

The Geniza manuscripts also enable us to obtain a detailed view of the Jews of Sicily under Arab rule; this is the topic of the third part of this volume. The profusion of information has come down to us by virtue of the fact that Sicily was an important leg of the triangle of the marine transport, and the economy in general, of the Mediterranean: Egypt–Sicily–the Maghrib. The letters preserved in the Geniza, which were written by Jewish merchants throughout the eleventh century, especially in the last half thereof, add important information with regard to the history of the island and its economic life; naturally, most of that information concerns the history of its Jewish population, including quite a number of major Jewish personages. I precede that discussion with a survey of the political and military history of Sicily—a survey principally based on Arab sources, as well as on the descriptions and commentaries of the outstanding Italian historian Michele Amari (1806-1889), although I disagree with him on some details and add to the survey information drawn from the Geniza letters.

The discussion about the Jews in the economic life of the Muslim world is focused on the period which ends in the late eleventh century;

^{iv} See the article of Elbogen, *Festschr. d. jüd. theolog. Sem. Breslau*, 61. See the letter to Ibn ʿAwkal: 33, a, ll. 12-13, and cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 93f. See Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1962), 156.

it provides some basic details of earlier chapters of Jewish economic history, such as that on the Rādhānites, on the Jewish moneychangers of Baghdad, and so forth. However, with regard to the Jews' role in international trade in the eleventh century, I was forced to contend with the profusion of information contained in the merchants' letters themselves. As stated above, I hope to be able to publish additional works, also based on those letters; at the same time, I cannot possibly finish myself all of the work on this topic. I truly hope, for example, that scholars whose field of research is economic history will find an interest in these letters and be able to compare the data contained therein with those of other sources and to retrieve inspiring details which will facilitate the understanding of important aspects of medieval economic life.

Worthy of note among the non-Jewish sources is Dionysius of Tel Maḥrē, from whom we learn of the great crisis involving the exilarchate in the first half of the ninth century (section 80 below); his writings may be deemed authentic, as he lived and worked at the time of those events. A passage from the (lost) chronicle of Dionysius was first quoted, early in the eighteenth century, by Assemani; this is, in fact, a passage copied by Dionysius from the works of Petrus the Younger, who was the Patriarch of Antioch starting in 578. Assemani also cites additional passages, which he ascribes to Dionysius, although they are not truly his. In 1895, Chabot published what he believed to be an abstract of the chronicle of Dionysius; a year later, Nau proved that the chronicle in question was not written by Dionysius, but by an anonymous author, who was a monk in Zūqnīn, near Amid. Chabot himself admitted his error, stating that what he had ascribed to Dionysius had, in fact, been written by the monk of Zūqnīn in 775; he also showed that a considerable portion of the chronicle of Dionysius is preserved in the chronicle of Michael the Syrian—as Michael himself states in his chronicle. A number of scholars have since repeated and confirmed these findings.

Of Dionysius himself, we know that he was the Ya'qubite Patriarch of Antioch starting in 818, and that he died on 22 August 845; he was a *tel-maḥrayyā*, i.e. his place of origin was Tel Maḥrē, now known as Tall al-Manāḥīr, near Raqqa, and was a monk in Qinnasrīn; he enjoyed a good relationship with Caliph al-Ma'mūn and even accompanied him on his journey to Egypt. His chronicle contained information on the period between 583 and 843, in two volumes. Michael the Syrian, as stated above, copied a large portion of this chronicle; Bar Hebraeus, in his ecclesiastical chronicle, copied it from Michael the Syrian.^v

^v See Assemani, *Bibl. Or.*, II, 72-77, who cites MS Vatican (Syri) 164: *ecclesiastica historia Dionysii Patriarchae*; see Chabot, *Chron.*, xxix. That 'abstract' was MS Vatican (Syri) 162, which he re-edited in 1927, in *CSCO* (Syri), vol. XLIII, under the title: *Chronicon anonymum pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, continued in 1933 in vol. LIII, and then published a Latin translation with an introduction, in vol. LXVI. See Nau, *JA*, 9^e sér., t. 8 (1896), 346, and see *ibid.*, 347 n. 1, a list of fragments

Almost self-understood is the role of the medieval Arabic sources in providing both direct information about many topics discussed in this volume and the general framework of every detail and event it describes. Also, without this background almost no understanding and deciphering of the Geniza letters would have been possible.

Like anyone writing in this day and age (and anyone who may write in the future) on the Jews of Egypt and the Maghrib, and the Mediterranean basin in general, I owe a great debt to my teacher, the late Prof. S.D. Goitein, especially in the part dealing with economics and the discussion of the merchants' letters. Goitein himself relied, to a great degree, on scholars who preceded him, and expressed his gratitude to them; although the limited scope of this Preface precludes individual mention of all those scholars, many of them are mentioned—as is Goitein himself—in the references below. Goitein frequently expressed his hope that his studies would be of interest and use to his followers, and that they would expand and develop the investigation of sources and passages which he had not had time to discuss in full.

wrongly considered by Assemani (al-Samʿānī) to be by Dionysius. See also what he wrote in the *Bulletin critique* 1895:321. Also see Chabot in his introduction to the chronicle of Michael the Syrian, xxxii: from chapter 21 in book 10 of Michael, to the end of book 12, we have before us a text mainly copied from Dionysius; see the Chronicle of Michael the Syrian, 378 (text); II, 357 (translation) = ch. 14 in book 12. Baron, *SRHJ*, V, 9, 295 n. 6 was apparently aware of only what Chabot wrote in his second edition of the chronicle of the anonymous writer of Zūqnīn (ascribed to Dionysius) and while discussing the dispute between David and Daniel, did not make use of the original versions by Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus. As he puts it, both Bar Hebraeus and Dionysius (in that order!) are describing the very same events; while there is no doubt that the only source before Bar Hebraeus was Dionysius. See the entry 'Denys de Tellmahré' in *DHGE*, XIV, 310f.; Nöldeke, *WZKM*, 10 (1986), 160; Duval, *Litt. syr.*, 203ff.; Haase, *OC*, NS 6:240, 1916; Abramowski, *Dionysius*, 22f.; also see Cahen, *Arabica*, 1 (1954), 136, who was not aware of the problem of the identity concerning the author of the chronicle, and ascribed the chronicle of Zūqnīn to Dionysius of Tel Mahrē; also see Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrol syr.*, 197, 208; Pigulevskaja, *JhB d. österr. byz. Ges.*, 16:55, 1967; Witakowski, *Syr. Chron.*, 30ff. More on Dionysius and on Tel Mahrē see: Zakī ʿIwād, *Majallat majmaʿ al-lugha al-suryāniyya*, 3 (1977), 46 f.; Vööbus, *OC*, 48:286, 1964, writes about a manuscript in the Syrian Patriarchy in Damascus, *qanōnā de-qadishā dionūsīus*, which tells about a gathering of the Yaʿqūbite Church after he was elected as patriarch, in October, 818; a schism took place at that time in the Church, and the opposition elected a rival patriarch, Aviram. See also *idem*, *Syrische Kanonensammlungen*, CSCO Subs., 35ff.; on the order of the chronicle's copies: Bar Hebraeus from Michael the Syrian and Michael the Syrian from Dionysius, see Nau, *Bull. crit.* (1896), 325; Brooks, *BZ*, 15 (1906), 583; Baumstark, *Gesch.*, 318. In research, the text of Bar Hebraeus is the one which is commonly cited, ascribing it to him; this is an accepted usage; similar, for instance, in the way texts written by earlier chroniclers are cited from and ascribed to Ṭabarī, since he collected, copied and included them in his own chronicles; but one should be aware of the fact that it is Michael the Syrian who was the first to ad libitum cite Dionysius. Michael the Syrian, who lived in the second half of the twelfth century, preceded Bar Hebraeus by ca. 100 years. Thus, the matter of Dionysius' chronicle has been well-known for some 800 years, and is not 'a discovery' of recent generations, as some appear to have thought.

With regard to the reference books, in matters of language, bibliography, and the calculation of the calendar, I have already mentioned them in the introduction to my book on Palestine. Meanwhile, however, three important and praiseworthy reference works have been published: (1) a bibliography of the publications of the Geniza manuscripts in Cambridge: S.C. Reif (ed.), *Published Material from the Cambridge Geniza Collections, a Bibliography 1896-1980*, Cambridge 1988; (2) the (Hebrew) catalog of the Mosseri Collection, published by the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National and University Library, Jerusalem 1990. (3) *The Cambridge Genizah Collections, Their Contents and Significance*, edited by Stefan C. Reif, with the Assistance of Shulamit Reif, Cambridge 2002.

Interested readers will be able to use these three reference books to complete the list of references to the Geniza documents housed in both those collections (which constitute a great majority in my collection); these lists, appearing in the preambles to the Geniza documents printed in my collection, are at times only partial.

In the calculation of the dates, it should be noted that, where mention is made of a number of days *baqīn* (remaining) of the month, the number which should, at times, be subtracted from the number of days of the month is, in fact, the number of days said to remain less one, because very often they also counted the day on which the letter was written as belonging to the remaining days. Thus for example, we find, in a letter written by ʿAyyāsh b. Sedāqā, no. 483, b, lines 2-3: "Tuesday, with four (days) remaining in Tammuz"; if we subtract 4 from 29, we find that the date is 25 Tammuz, but in fact, 25 Tammuz never falls on Tuesday. This indicates that he took into account the date on which the letter was written, so that actually there were only three days remaining in the month. A similar case is that of a letter written by Abraham b. Farrāh. 544, a, line 3, who writes that there were 'two nights' remaining in Iyar, and that the day was Friday; this would seem to indicate 27 Iyar, but 27 Iyar never falls on Friday. Therefore we should not subtract 2 from 29, but only 1, resulting in the date of 28 Iyar.

The transcription of the Arabic names and words in this book is in conformity with accepted scholarly usage. Hebrew titles and names are transcribed in a less 'orthodox' manner; both Biblical and later names and terms are transcribed according to the usage in current research, as for example in the *Ecncyclopedia Judaica*. Naturally there is a certain lack of uniformity in this, which I hope will be accepted by most readers with a degree of tolerance.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the institutions which assisted me in writing this book, and especially to the libraries where the Geniza manuscripts included in my collection are kept. I thank the directors and employees of those libraries for their courteous service

and for the permission to publish the documents: Cambridge University Library (the old collection and the Taylor-Shechter Collection); the New York Jewish Theological Seminary Library (the Adler Collection and the Shechter Collection); the Bodleian Library in Oxford; the British Library in London (manuscripts which have formerly belonged to the British Museum and mentioned in references under BM, now replaced by BL); the Annenberg Institute Library (the Dropsie Collection) in Philadelphia; the Freer Gallery in Washington; the Alliance israélite universelle Library in Paris; the Westminster College Library in Cambridge; the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest (the David Kaufmann Collection); the Austrian National Library (the Archduke Rainer Collection); the State Library in Berlin; the University Library in Heidelberg; the John Rylands Library in Manchester; the University Library in St. Petersburg. The Department of Manuscripts and the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts of the National and University Library in Jerusalem made their collections available to me, particularly the photographs and microfilms of the Mosseri Collection. I was given important assistance by the staff of the Central Library of Tel Aviv University, where I did most of my work, and I am grateful to them. As regards the present English version, I am particularly grateful to Professor Paul B. Fenton, the editor of the "*Études sur le judaïsme médiéval*", who graciously accepted the book for this series; and to Doctor David Strassler for the translation from the Hebrew. I am also grateful to Professor Nili Cohen, Rector of Tel Aviv University, and to Professor Itamar Rabinovich, its President, for the financial aid, which made the English translation possible. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Carmela Shemesh, who prepared the index; and to Mrs. Perlina Varon, who typed the manuscript and prepared the book for press; to Mrs. Golda Swed, who typed whatever was in Arabic script; to Professor Jeremy Cohen, Head of the Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center, and to its staff, Ms. Ora Azta, Aviva Mizrahi, Aviva Rosenthal, Sirette Daniel, for their help; and, last not least, to Dr. Marcella Mulder, Assistant Editor at the Brill Publishing House in Leiden, who guided us throughout the publication process.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AESC</i>	<i>Anneles: économies, sociétés, civilisations</i>
AH	hijra year
<i>AI</i>	<i>Ars Islamica</i>
AIBL	Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres
<i>AIEO</i>	<i>Annales de l'Institut d'études orientales</i> (Alger)
AIU	Alliance israélite universelle, Paris
<i>AJSL</i>	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
AM	anno mundi, era of the creation
Antonin	The Antonin Geniza collection, St. Petersburg
<i>AO</i>	<i>Ars Orientalis</i>
<i>AOL</i>	<i>Archives de l'Orient latin</i>
<i>ASSO</i>	<i>Archivio storico per la Sicilia Orientale</i>
<i>BEO</i>	<i>Bulletin d'études orientales</i>
<i>BGA</i>	<i>Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum</i>
BL	British Library
Bodl MS Heb	The collection of Hebrew (Judaeo-Arabic) MSs at the Bodleian Library, Oxford
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> (London)
BT	Babylonian Talmud
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>CHM</i>	<i>Cahiers d'histoire médiévale</i>
Consist. isr.	The Geniza collection of the Consistoire israélite, Paris
<i>CSCO</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
<i>DHGE</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique</i>
DK	The David Kaufmann Collection, Budapest
Dropsie	The Geniza Collection of Dropsie University (at the Annenberg Institute, Philadelphia)
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
ENA	The Elkanah Nathan Adler Collection, at the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
<i>EO</i>	<i>Échos d'Orient</i>
f.	folium
Firkovitch	The Geniza collection of A. Firkovitch, St. Petersburg
<i>GAL</i>	(C. Brockelmann,) <i>Geschichte der arabischen Literatur</i>
<i>GAS</i>	(F. Sezgin,) <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i>
HUC	Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati)
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>IC</i>	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
<i>IOS</i>	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
<i>IQ</i>	<i>Islamic Quarterly</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal asiatique</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JJGL</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur</i>
<i>JJLG</i>	<i>Jahrbuch der jüdisch-literarischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>JJLP</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Lore and Philosophy</i>
<i>JLA</i>	<i>Jewish Law Annual</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>

JNUL	Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Jewish Social Studies</i>
JTS	Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
<i>JZWL</i>	<i>Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica</i>
<i>MGWJ</i>	<i>Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums</i>
Mosseri	The Geniza Collection of the Jewish Community in Cairo, kept by the Mosseri family
<i>MPG</i>	Migne, <i>Patrologia</i> , series Graeca
<i>MPL</i>	Migne, <i>Patrologia</i> , series Latina
MS	Manuscript
<i>MW</i>	<i>The Muslim World</i>
<i>MWJ</i>	<i>Magazin für die Wissenschaft der Judenthums</i>
<i>OC</i>	<i>Oriens Christianus</i>
<i>OLZ</i>	<i>Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung</i>
<i>PAAJR</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i>
<i>PBA</i>	<i>Proceedings of the British Academy</i>
PER	The collection of MSs named after Erzherzog (Archduke) Rainer, Vienna
PT	Palestinian Talmud
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
<i>RIEIM</i>	<i>Revista del Instituto Egipcio de estudios islamicos</i>
<i>RSI</i>	<i>Rivista storica italiana</i>
<i>RSO</i>	<i>Rivista degli studi orientali</i>
Sel.	Seleucid era
<i>SRHJ</i>	<i>A Social and Religious History of the Jews</i> (S.W. Baron)
TS	The Taylor Schechter Collection, University Library, Cambridge
ULC	University Library, Cambridge
<i>WZKM</i>	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZfbB</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie</i>
<i>ZNTW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

GLOSSARY OF HEBREW AND ARABIC TERMS

<i>‘alāma</i>	a specific word, or formula, used by notables at the end of their correspondence; sign of discrimination, on garments of the <i>dhihmīs</i> .
<i>alūf</i>	a scholar appointed by the yeshiva, generally to serve as judge and leader in his community, but also a honorific title, granted by the Babylonian yeshivot.
<i>amīr</i>	a military commander.
<i>av-bēt-dīn</i>	head of the court.
<i>dayyān</i>	judge.
<i>gaon</i> (pl. <i>geonim</i> ; exact spelling: <i>gā’ōn</i>)	head of the yeshiva.
<i>ḥadīth</i>	Muslim oral tradition, generally ascribed to the prophet.
<i>ḥāvēr</i> (pl. <i>ḥavērīm</i>)	a scholar appointed by the yeshiva as leader and judge in his community, a title granted mainly by the Palestinian yeshiva.
<i>heqdēsh</i> (also: <i>qodesh</i>)	the Jewish pious foundations, for the benefit of the synagogues, the poor, and so on.
<i>ketubbā</i>	marriage contract.
<i>kunya</i>	the byname beginning with Abū (father of...).
<i>melammēd</i>	teacher.
<i>midrash</i>	traditional interpretation of a Biblical passage (often in an anecdotal style).
<i>mumḥē</i>	a person authorized by the yeshiva to assist the local judge.
<i>nagid</i> , (pl. <i>negidim</i>)	in the period under discussion: leader, title granted by the yeshiva to a Jewish notable who was close to the caliph’s court.
<i>nāsī</i> (pl. <i>nesī’īm</i>)	in the period under discussion: a member of the exilarchic family, which claimed descent from King David.
<i>parnās</i>	a community official in charge of charity, financial matters, maintenance, and so on.
<i>piyyūt</i> (pl. <i>piyyūfīm</i>)	religious poem; <i>payyṭān</i> , author of <i>piyyūfīm</i> .
<i>rōsh</i> (Hebrew) or <i>ra’īs</i> (Arabic)	head, chief, leader.
<i>rōsh ha-gōlā</i>	head of the Diaspora, exilarch.
<i>rōsh ha-shānā</i>	the Jewish New Year’s day.
<i>rōsh kallā</i>	‘head of a row’, the same as <i>alūf</i> .
<i>sijill</i>	a decree issued by the highest Muslim state authority (usually the caliph).
<i>talmīd</i>	title of a scholar, correspondent of the yeshiva; less than <i>ḥāvēr</i> .
<i>yeshiva</i> (pl. <i>yeshivot</i>)	main institution of Jewish communal leadership and learning.

PART ONE
IN THE ARAB PENINSULA

CHAPTER ONE

THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWS OF YATHRIB

1. *Hijāz and Dārūm*

(1) The origin and nature of the Jews in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula (Hijāz), particularly the Jews of Yathrib-Medina, are still something of an enigma and the contemporary scholar may encounter considerable difficulty sorting it out. Curiously enough, even the knowledge we do have is derived from Muslim sources which seem to have been aware of the obstacles and tried to do their best by providing us with varied and contradictory versions ending with the famous expression of ancient Arabic skepticism "God knows better".

Both talmudic and Islamic traditions generally agree when describing a Jewish population which inhabited the south-eastern parts of Palestine (including Transjordan) with an extensive border with the Bedouin tribes. Jericho, Şo'ar, Eylat, formed the northern edge of this Jewish area, which extended into the Arabian Peninsula from the "valley of the villages" (*wādī'l-qurā*), which according to Muslim tradition, was the border between Hijāz and al-Shām, stretching southward to the city of Yathrib. According to Ibn Ishāq, the Prophet sent Usāma b. Zayd b. Hāritha, "to drive his horses" into "*al-dārūm* of the land of *filastīn* through *takhūm al-balqā*", (al-Balqā' being southern Transjordan, the land of Moab). The Hebrew names 'Dārūm' and 'Takhūm' speak for themselves.

To a large extent, this information supports the epigraphic findings, such as we discover in the inscription published by Altheim and Stiehl, from a photograph taken in 1965 at Madā'in Šālīḥ. This inscription was engraved on a tomb erected by 'Adnūn bar Hōnī (or Hunnay) bar Shemū'el Rēsh Higrā, for his wife Mūna, daughter of 'Amru bar 'Adnūn bar Shemū'el Rēsh Tayma' who died in Av 251 at the age of 38. The year was AD 356, if the counting began when Provincia Arabia was founded by the Emperor Trajan (AD 105) or AD 319, if the counting begins with 68, thought to be the year of the destruction of the Temple.¹

¹ See the talmudic sources gathered by Krauss, *ZDMG*, 70: 321, 1916, and information on localities in the south of Palestine, in *Sefer ha-yishūv*, I, the articles Arabien, in *Enc. Jud.* (by J. Horowitz) in the German edition, and Arabia (by H.Z. Hirschberg) in the English edition; the first comprehensive study in the history of the Jews in the Arabian Peninsula seems to have been that of Hirschfeld, *REJ*, 7: 167, 1883, continued *ibid.*, 10:10, 1885; see also the survey based on Arab sources and on previous research literature, in Hirschberg, *Yisrā'el*, 36-49, 112-137. See Ibn Ishāq, in Ibn Hishām, 970. Saadia Gaon, in his commentary, still uses the term *Dārūm* in the meaning of Negev. *Takhūm* might have been used by the Arabs to denote the Roman system of fortifications, the *limes*; whereas, as in Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 8, its meaning might have been the Provincia Arabia; Sadūm, he says, is located between Ur-

2. *The Jews and the Bedouin*

(2) Muslim traditionists could not even conceive of the existence of any earlier settlers of Yathrib other than the Jews. Some of them mention the Amalekites, however, as its earliest inhabitants, who according to legend, were destroyed by the *banū isrā'il* when they took over the area, but little historical value can be attributed to this information and it is obviously a purely imaginative legend inspired by the Bible. Thus, the Jews were said to be the first inhabitants to farm the land in northern Ḥijāz, in Yathrib and its vicinity; they were the ones who dug the wells, planted the date palms, and practiced various kinds of farming. They were also the builders of houses (*aaṭām*). They are the only historically based settlers known to Muslim traditions. 'Farming', 'settlement', 'property', and 'crafts' were the concepts represented by the Jews, in contrast to the Arabs who were the nomads, the Bedouin. In the words of Nu'aym b. Mas'ūd, of the Banū Ghatafān, a master of intrigue, who acted on behalf of the Prophet during the battle of the *khandaq*: "The B. Qurayza were people of singular lineage and property whereas we were merely an Arab tribe which possessed neither palm trees nor vineyards and only dealt in sheep and camels". The Bedouin were generally employed by the Jews during harvest time, when they would arrive with their camels and take the bunches of dates to be sold in the villages, retaining half the revenue for themselves. They considered this hard labor, as can be seen from the Prophet's comforting verse when they had to convey the bricks needed to build the first mosque: *hādhā ḥimālun lā ḥimālu khaybara* ("what you carry here is unlike what you had to carry in Khaybar"). Banū Naḍir and Banū Qurayza were treated as 'kings' or "rulers over Medina". They ruled over the Aws and the Khazraj, assisting the governor (*ʿāmil*), who was appointed by the *marzubān*, the Persian ruler over the Bedouin, who would collect their taxes (*kharāj*) for him. A tradition quoted by Samhūdī from Ibn Shabba relates that it was the Jews who guarded the gates of Yathrib and demanded tithes from anyone wishing to enter the city (*an yu'ashshira*).²

dunn (*Jund Urdunn*, that is, Palaestina Secunda, the northern part of Palestine) and *takhūm ard al-ʿarab*; see Altheim and Stiehl, *Araber*, V (1), 306f., and the facsimile *ibid.*, 500.

² See the traditions on the antiquities of Yathrib and the Jews, Samhūdī, I, 234; Nu'aym b. Mas'ūd: Wāqidi, 480; Torrey, 13, rebuts—without any proof—the information found in Arab sources, that it is the Jews who founded Yathrib; the burdens of Khaybar: Samhūdī, I, 234; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, I, 260. Collection of *kharāj*: Ibn Khurdādhbih, 128, copied by Samhūdī, II, 269, who also quotes al-Aqshaharī (d. 1330), who included this information in his *Rawḍat al-firdaws*, a lost history of Medina, see Ḥājī Khalīfa, III, 505f.; Brockelmann, *GAL*, S II, 928. Obviously, *kharāj* in this connection refers to poll tax, similar to the talmudic *kargā*; the tradition seems to pertain to the period of Persian rule in Ḥijāz. In this matter, see also: Altheim and Stiehl, *Araber*, V, 306f.; Kister, *Arabica*, 15 (1968), 145f. On the office of *marzubān*, see: Nöldeke, *Gesch. d. P.*, 446; Gignoux, *JSAI*, 4:1, 1984. On the guard at the gates of Yathrib: Samhūdī, I, 41; Damīrī, *Ḥayawān*, I, 218: in an unexplainable way, the verb *ʿashshara* (in its second form), the collection of tithes, came to refer to a donkey's braying, meaning that those entering the city were allegedly required to bray like donkeys. Goldziher, *Muh. St.*, I, 19, n. 2, thought that this expressed a protest against tax collectors; nonetheless, it might have been merely some local slang. See also in *Aghānī*, VII, 101, verses mentioning the Jew as the tax collector (*yu'ashshir*).

(3) This general picture seems to have still prevailed at the time the Prophet arrived in Medina (the *hijra*), while Persian influence, based on the Jews of Medina, was being strengthened by the Persian victory over Byzantium. This seems to lend credibility to the legendary Muslim traditions which have the *ibn ra's al-jālūt*, the exilarch's son, discussing with the Prophet in Medina the names of the stars Joseph saw in his dream. The traditions were even aware of his name: Bustānī. The traditions reflect two facts: the Jews of Medina's links with the Babylonian center and their influential status in the Ḥijāz, which was strengthened by its affiliation with and support of the reigning power of the day—Persia. This is illustrated by the fact that after the Khaybar expedition, Al-Ḥajjāj b. 'Ilāṭ al-Sulamī hurries to Mecca with the Prophet's permission, in order to get money from his wife and debtors, to purchase some of the booty taken from the Jews. Before returning to Khaybar, he tells 'Abbās, the Prophet's uncle: "By God, when I left (Khaybar) your brother's son was marrying their king's daughter!" (i.e. Ṣafiyya).

The Prophet always addresses the Jews of Medina as kinsfolk and the offspring of the ancient Banū Isrā'īl. They were said to speak a language of their own, which Muslim sources referred to as *raṭan*, apparently a non-Arabic tongue which Ṭabari claimed was Persian. The Prophet ordered Zayd b. Thābit to teach himself *al-suryaniyya*, i.e. Aramaic, which he managed to accomplish in seventeen days, in order to understand what the Jews were writing.³

³ The son of the exilarch: Ibn Hishām, 351; Dahlān, I, 393; Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XV, 555; Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, II, 302; Abū'l-Fidā', *Tafsīr*, II, 468; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, I, 199; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mawāḍi'āt*, I, 145; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, IX, 121; Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, I, 240; Shawkānī, *Fath*, III, 6; al-Nawawī al-Jāwī, *Marāḥ*, I, 398; Naysābūrī, *Gharā'ib*, XII, 96; these traditions go back to Jābir b. 'Abdallāh, the Khazrajite (B. Ghanm), a contemporary of the Prophet (*infra*, section 62; see also in sections 59, 62, the discussion on Ibn Ṣalūbā (present in Medina at the time of the Prophet's arrival there), evidently a nickname of Bustanai (the 'crucifier', i.e. the Jew). The story of al-Ḥajjāj: Ibn Hishām, 771; Altheim and Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte*, 127, cite it as evidence of their rather strange theory, to the effect that the B. Naḍīr were a kind of feudal rulers of Khaybar, landlords of Jewish tenants who thereafter became tenants of the Muslims. See also Wellhausen, *Sk. u. Vorarb.*, IV, 137. On *raṭan*: Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, II, 86; Ṭabarī, *Dalā'il*, 88; Zayd b. Thābit: Ṭihāwī, *Mu'taṣar*, II, 304f.; after learning Aramaic, Zayd was able to write to the Jews and to read the letters of the Jews in Khaybar to the Prophet, since he spoke the Jewish language; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, II, 538. 'Abdallāh b. 'Atīq was sent at the head of the group which was assigned to attack the house of Abū Rāfi', leader of the Jews in Khaybar, since he spoke the Jewish language, *kāna yartūnu bi'l-yahūdīyyati*, see Wāqidi, 392; cf. Wansbrough, *Qur. St.*, 105 (his translation: "he could talk like the Jews"); see also Newby, *JQR*, NS 61 (1971), 212ff., who assumes that the language which was referred to by early Arab compilers as *al-yahūdīyya* was an Arabic dialect spoken by the Jews, in which they included Hebrew and Aramaic words as well; from this dialect, Muḥammad drew such terms as *ṣadaqa*, *ṣalāh* and others; it seems to me that this is an opinion devoid of any proof in the sources; it is much more plausible that those Jews spoke Aramaic, except perhaps for some Arab clans that converted to Judaism, which is the theme of this chapter. On *raṭan*, see also Greenfield, *Finkel Jub. Vol.*, 63-69, who discusses the meaning of the root principally in Jewish Aramaic and in Syriac. During the battle of the *khandaq*, Khawwāt b. Jubayr was caught by a sentry of the B. Qurayza, whom he overheard speaking among themselves in the Jewish language, *bi'l-yahūdīyya*. He later overcame this Jew by getting hold of his *mī'awl*, pickax, "since none of them would walk around at any time without holding his pickax under his girdle"; this reminds us, of course, of the Essenes as described by Josephus, *Bellum*, ii:137, 148 as carrying with them a hatchet (ᾠξινόριον), probably following Deut. 23:12-15.

3. *The first settlers*

(4) On the basis of merely a few sources, one perceives that there were indeed clear-cut social and cultural differences between the Jews of Yathrib and the Bedouin. They were two separate sectors of the population of the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula, which was known as the homeland of the Bedouin. Muslim sources differ as to the time they arrived in Hījāz and Yathrib. Some say it was after the flood in Noah's day, while others claim that it was during Moses' expeditions against the Amalekites. Still others say it was at the time of David and Solomon, or during Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of the Temple. There are also traditions claiming the existence of Jewish migration into Hījāz at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple at the hands of the Romans.

Some modern scholars have accepted the various versions of the traditions placing the origins of the Jews in Hījāz in the Biblical period. Thus Torrey sought here traces of the Jewish merchants of Nippur. Others found a connection with what is said in I Chron. v: 41-43: "And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there, and destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms: because there was pasture there for their flocks". And it continues: "And some of them, even of the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Se'ir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi". "And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped and dwelt there until this day".

An incredible theory was put forward more than a century ago by Dozy, who believed there was a parallel between *makka* (meaning beating or smote, as it is written there), and Makka (Mecca). Dozy and others also derived inspiration from Jer. xl: 11-12: "Likewise when all the Jews that were in Moab, and among the Ammonites, and in Edom, and that were in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan; even all the Jews returned out of all places whither they were driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah, unto Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruits very much". And also in II Chron. xxvi:2: "He (Uzziah) built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers". And further on, in verses 7-8: "And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurba'al, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly".⁴

⁴ See the various traditions in Samhūdī, 107ff. On the time of Moses, see also the quotation from 'Imād al-dīn al-Wāsiṭī, printed by Wüstenfeld in his edition of Ibn Hishām, II, 106f. (E); Ibn al-Najjār, 324; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh*, MS BL Or 4215, fol. 114a; Nebuchadnezzar's time: Abū'l-Fidā': *Mukhtaṣar*, I, 31 (quoting the *Tajārīb al-umam*): this happened as Nebuchadnezzar was on his way to conquer Egypt, when some Jews, who first fled to Egypt at the time of the fall of Jerusalem, were forced to seek refuge in Hījāz. See also: Balādhurī, *Futūh*, 15. The Murashū brothers: Torrey, 279, n. 6; cf. Hirschberg, *Yisrā'el*, 36; see the first chapter in Dozy, *De Israëliten*; the notes of Harkavy in Grätz's *History* (Hebrew transl. by S.P. Rabinowitz), III, 74, n. 8; Margoliouth, *Relations*, 28-56; Montgomery, *Ara-*

(5) The Arab traditions setting the first Jewish settlement of Ḥijāz at the time of the Romans and the destruction of the Second Temple, speak of the “king of the Rūm’s” intention, immediately after conquering al-Shām, to marry a daughter of the Banū Hārūn (i.e. the priests) despite the fact that their religion forbade them to marry Christians (!). They then invited all his people to a feast, and killed them in the course of the festivities. Then they fled to Ḥijāz, to the Banū Isrā’īl who lived there. The Roman king pursued them but his troops were unable to overtake them and the Romans died of thirst near a creek (*thamad*) which is known as *thamad al-rūm* to this very day.

This story is clearly analogous to the talmudic tradition which tells of eighty thousand youngsters of priestly descent who fled to the Ishmaelites after the Temple was destroyed. As they were very thirsty, they asked for water, and the Bedouin then “brought before them salty food and inflated water skins, telling them to eat and drink. As they untied the water skins, the air would run out of the water skins into their mouths and choke them...this is the way cousins treat you”. The Palestinian Talmud draws a parallel between this story and that of Hagar and Ishmael; like the latter, the Jews who fled to Arabia eventually found a well in the wilderness from which they were able to drink. Similarly, Muslim traditions resemble the talmudic one regarding the young priests, with the story of the *thamad al-rūm* also referring to priests (Banū Hārūn). The Banū Naḍīr and the Banū Qurayza, according to the Arab traditions, claimed priestly descent. Muslim sources often call them *al-kāhinān*, “the two priests”. “Qurayza and Naḍīr (were called *al-kāhinān*) because they were people of the book and of knowledge”, (*kitābin wa- fahmin*). There is a *ḥadīth* saying “there will emerge from *al-kāhinān* a man who will teach (*yadrusu*) the Qu’rān as no one has before him” often followed by the remark: “Some say that this man was Muḥammad b. Ka’b (b. Asad) al-Quraẓī; but God knows better”.⁵

4. Further Muslim traditions

(6) The supposedly exact genealogy of Naḍīr and Qurayza can also be found in the Muslim traditions: Qurayza, Naḍīr, Hadal, were the sons of

bia and the Bible, contains a thorough discussion of the biblical passages alluding to Arabs or the Arabian Peninsula.

⁵ At the time when the tradition was recorded, the Rūm, i.e. Byzantines, were already Christians, and it is they who were known to the Arabs. The Muslim tradition: Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, XIX, 94ff.; Samhūdī, I, 112; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 635; IV, 462; talmudic traditions: PT *Ta’aniyōt*, iv, 69b; *Lam. Rabba*, ii, no. 117 (Buber ed., 108). Hirschberg, *Yisrā’el*, 118, assumes that the Muslim tradition is perhaps related to the Aelius Gallus expedition into Yemen (25 BC), but this is completely unfounded. *Al-kāhinān*: Fārisī, MS Bodl Hunt 227, III, fol. 127. Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, IV, 41; Sam’ānī, *Ansāb*, MS BL Add 23,355, fol. 447b: “Qurayza and Naḍīr were two brothers, among the children of Hārūn, the Prophet”. Suhaylī, *Ta’rīf*, MS India Office 4110, fol. 54b: “... their descent from Hārūn is a true matter, since the Prophet told Ṣafīyya when he found her weeping (after she was offended by someone) saying: your father is Hārūn, your (paternal) uncle Mūsā, and your husband Muḥammad”; see also: Suyūfī, *Khaṣā’iṣ*, II, 476. Hirschberg, *Tarbiz*, 44 (1974/5), 152, relates the tradition of the *kāhinān* to an inscription found in Yemen containing the list of the priestly wards. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, 48 finds the story logical, as it may be assumed that they indeed sought to stay together, because of the laws on priestly purity.

(backwards): Nuḥām–Tanḥūm–[°]Awf–Qays–Finḥās–al-[°]Āzar–al-Kāhin–Hārūn–[°]Imrān–Qāhith–Lāwī. It is obvious that this is a fabrication derived from a combination of some well-known Jewish names (Naḥūm, Tanḥūm), biblical personalities (Pinḥas, El[°]azar, Aharon, [°]Amram, Qehat, Levi) “a priest”—Kāhin (Kohen) used as a person’s name and two Arabic names, [°]Awf and Qays. Another genealogy runs to Qurayza–Naḍīr–Nuḥām [°]Amr (who is Hadal) sons of Khazraj–Šarīḥ–Tu’mān–Sibṭ–al-Yasā[°]–Sa’d–Lāwī–Khayr–Nuḥām–Tanḥūm–[°]Āzar–[°]Āzra–Hārūn–[°]Imrān–Yīshar–Qāhith–Lāwī–Ya[°]qub (who is Isrā’īl)–Ishāq–Ibrāhīm. Abū’l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, the compiler of the *Aghānī*, was probably skeptical about these genealogies, for he declares that he has not found any genealogy of the Qurayza, Naḍīr, and Qaynuqā[°], as they were not Arabs who tended to record their genealogies but were only allies (or protected people: *ḥulafā’*) of the Arabs.

Apparently Jewish dwelling places and their lands, which consisted mainly of date palm plantations and wells, were scattered throughout Medina. Some Jews lived in Qubā’, the southern quarter. To the west of *masjid qubā’* lay al-Buwayra (or al-Buwayla) where the Naḍīr and Qurayza formerly lived and which later on became the Prophet’s domain (*ṣadaqa*).⁶

(7) The question of whether the Jews of Medina were indeed the descendants of ethnic Jews or of converts to Judaism, has been widely discussed. In Nöldeke’s view, if the Jews of Arabia had been the offspring of immigrants, they could not have been so successfully absorbed into the tribal society of the Arabs. He was particularly impressed by their contribution to Arab poetry, which he considered a genuine expression of the Arab spirit, devoid of any Jewish elements. Winckler strongly defended that view, arguing (against Wellhausen), that the Jews, who were people of a higher social level, could not have become wholly assimilated into Arab society, just as the European immigrants in North America could not become Indians. Lammens also felt that the Jews, representing a loftier degree of civilization, had the advantage over their Bedouin neighbours in this respect, influencing many of them to accept Judaism. Detailed arguments supporting this view were also put forward by Nau, who stressed four major factors relating to the problem of the Jews in the entire Arabian peninsula: a) It is known that the Jews went in for extensive propaganda in their attempt to spread Judaism in many countries, including the Ḥijāz, b) Almost all the Jews mentioned during the Prophet’s lifetime have Arab names, c) They needed the spiritual leadership which came to them from outside Arabia (referring to the Jews of Ḥimyar), like the Christians of Naḥrān, and d) The phenomenon of a Jewish kingdom (Ḥimyar) was outside

⁶ See the genealogies: Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 387 (Yanḥūm instead of Tanḥūm; this variation, like others found here, stems naturally from the peculiarities of the Arab script, and mostly from the matter of the diacritical dots); Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 442; Suhaylī, *Rawḍ*, I, 12; *ibid.*, 165: al-Najjām instead of Nuḥām; Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, III, 13; Samḥūdī, I, 113; the early traditionist perhaps meant Naḥḥām, meaning “the one who pants”, like e.g. Nu’aym al-Naḥḥām; see Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, III, 132; see also mentions of the *kāhinān* in the *Diwān* of Qays b. Khaṭīm, no. 2, line 13; no. 14, line 6; no. 17, line 2. Dwellings of the Jews: Samḥūdī, II, 267. There are many other references to property formerly owned by the Jews in different parts of Medina which became *ṣadaqāt* following the expulsion and annihilation of the Jews, e.g., the seven farms of Mukhayrīq: Mayṭhab, Diyāfa, Dilāl, Ḥusnā, Barqa, A[°]wāf, Mashrabat Umm Ibrāhīm; see Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *‘Uyūn*, I, 208; see my article: Gil, *JNES*, 57:125, 1998.

the Jewish norm unless the royal family involved were proselytes. D.S. Margoliouth considered the problem of the Judaism of the Yathrib Jews as completely obscure and expressed considerable doubts as to whether they were really Jews, preferring to consider them only monotheists, or in his term: Rahmanists. Torrey seems to have been the only scholar of that generation who was willing to accept the fact that the Judaism of the Yathrib Jews was genuine, mainly in contradiction to Winckler. Among more recent scholars, Hirschberg was the one who stressed that his impression that the majority of Yathrib Jews were the offspring of Arab proselytes, stems from the considerable number of Muslim traditions which deal with the Judaizing process among those Arabs who were neighbours of the Jews.⁷

(8) From this short and partial survey of opinions on the Jews of Medina, one may conclude that the discussion centered on circumstantial arguments but it is preferable to focus on the Arab sources themselves. Some of the sources which definitely associate the Jews of Hījāz with the Arab tribes were known to these scholars and I shall mention below quite a number of such sources. Suhaylī, for instance, informs us that apart from Qurayza, Nadīr, and Qaynuqā', some people of the Aws and Khazraj also became Jewish (*man tahawwada*). There were also some Arab women who vowed that if their child lived, they would make it a Jew (*tahawwadathu*) as they considered the Jews knowledgeable and people of the book (*'ilmin wa-kitābin*). Ya'qūbī, after describing Yaman as an area which became mainly Jewish due to the action of the *tubba'*, mentions that people from Aws and Khazraj also became Jewish after they arrived in Yathrib from Yaman, due to the fact that they were influenced by the Jews of Khaybar and Yathrib. People of the Banū Hārith b. Ka'b, of Ghassān and of Judhām, also accepted Judaism. Actually there seem to have been many more clans in Yathrib that were Jewish. Samhūdī mentions a number of such clans, such as the Banū Quṣayṣ, B. Marthad, B. Mu'āwiya, B. Jadhma', B. Nāghīṣa, B. Za'ūrā, B. Hujr, and B. Tha'laba. Wāqīdī mentions Ḥusayka, a sort of suburb of Medina, "close to Dhūbab", which was inhabited by Jews who owned many houses.

I have already mentioned the B. Hadal, and above, seen B. Hadal identified with 'Amr, whereas one of the names in the earlier genealogy was 'Awf, perhaps hinting at some connection with the B. 'Amr b. 'Awf. There is a tradition indicating that Tha'laba b. Sha'yā, his brother Usayd, and Asad b. 'Ubayd, belonged to the B. Hadal, i.e. they were Jewish. However, they were spared on the night the B. Qurayza were killed. There is also mention of Asad's son 'Alī, whose mother was Umāma bint Bishr b. Zu'ba, sister of 'Abbād. Some say that the B. Hadal ('Amr b. 'Awf?) were together with Qurayza during the *jāhiliyya* and then under Islam (evidently after Muḥammad's arrival in Medina) became the masters of the B. Qurayza.⁸

⁷ Nöldeke, *Beiträge*, 52ff.; Winckler, 72; Lammens, *Mél. Univ. St. Jos.*, 5 (1912), 605f.; Nau, *Les Arabes*, 113ff.; Margoliouth, *Relations*, 71; Torrey, 8-27, n. 98; Hirschberg, *Yisrā'el*, 122, 297, n. 98.

⁸ Suhaylī, *Rawḍ*, IV, 297; Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 298; Ibn Rusta, 217: Judaism spread into Himyar, B. Kināna, B. Hārith b. Ka'b, and Kinda; the same in Tawhīdī, *Baṣā'ir*, II, 45, and Samhūdī, I, 114ff., who quotes a tradition concerning more than 20 Jewish tribes that lived in Yathrib; see also Ibn al-Najjār, 326; cf. Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, 192ff.; Ḥusayka: Wāqīdī, 23, 466; Zamakhsharī, *Amkina*, 77; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 270f.; on Hadal, etc., see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*,

(9) Another tribe which adopted Judaism was the B. Ḥishna b. ʿUkārima b. ʿAwf, of Balī. After fighting the B. Rabaʿa, they expressed the desire to settle in Taymā, but the Jews would not accept them unless they became Jewish, so some of them did and moved to Medina later on. Some traditions even make the Aws and Khazraj descendants of the Jews, namely, of the 400 *aḥbār* left by the *tubbaʿ* in Medina. Abū Ayyūb (Khālid b. Zayd), one of the *anṣār* of Khazraj, in whose house the Prophet stayed for a time after arriving in Medina, is said to have been a descendant of such a *ḥabr*, and to have preserved a letter from the *tubbaʿ* for the Prophet, as the *tubbaʿ* was aware of the Prophet's eventual arrival. Abu Ayyūb actually handed over the letter to the Prophet. Jews are also explicitly mentioned among the B. Hāritha, which designation apparently applied to the B. Qayla, that is, both Aws and Khazraj.

Abū ʿAḥaf, one of the Prophet's rivals, who was killed some twenty months after the *hijra*, is said to have been a Jew belonging to the clan of B. ʿAmr b. ʿAwf. Zāhira, described as one of the largest villages in the area around Medina, was inhabited by 300 Jewish craftsmen (*ṣānīʿ*). B. Jafna are mentioned together with Jewish groups in the *kitāb al-umma*, as well as B. Shuṭayba (see also below, sec. 35). The B. Jafna, evidently clients of Thaʿlaba and part of the Ghassān, were described as "kings in Palestine" (al-Shām). The Thaʿlaba themselves were at least partly Judaized, since they are referred to as *min yahūda*. The B. Shuṭayba are also described as people from Palestine. Mentioned with them are also the B. Zaʿūra, similarly known as a Jewish clan. Note should also be taken of the other tribes and clans with whom Jews were connected, according to the above-mentioned *kitāb al-umma*, discussed in the next chapter; among them the B. ʿAwf, B. Najjār, B. Hārith, B. Sāʿida, B. Jusham, B. Aws.

No conclusive evidence is as yet available regarding the nature of these Jewish *mawālī* and whether they stemmed from Arab clans or were the offspring of Jews who had settled in the city centuries before Islam. The major portion of traditions on Jews preserved in the sources surveyed so far, point to proselytes from among the Bedouin.⁹

I, 1490; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 417; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Durar*, 190; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, I, 58 (quoting Ibn Ishāq with regard to the position of the B. Ḥadal in Islam); *ibid.*, II, 71; cf. Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, II, 309. On Umāma bint Bishr, see also Ibn Saʿd, VIII, 236; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, IV, 235; her brother ʿAbbād was among those who killed Kaʿb b. al-Ashraf, see Ibn Saʿd, II (1), 26; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Durar*, 151; they were of the B. ʿAbd al-Ashhal, see Ibn Saʿd, III (2), 16f., a clan whose people all accepted Muḥammad, except one Yashaʿ, who was a leader of the Jews, see Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 286. On ʿAbbād, see also Ibn Ḥazm, *Jawāmiʿ*, 89f.; Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, II, 263. On B. Quṣays, B. Nāghisa, B. Zaʿūra, and more Jewish clans (or clans of converts to Judaism), see Lecker, *Muslims*, 21f., 41-49, 71f.

⁹ On B. Ḥishna: Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, 29, quoting ʿUmar b. Shabba; cf. Horowitz, *IC*, 3 (1929), 177. Aws and Khazraj: Samhūdī, I, 189; cf. Kister, *IOS*, 2 (1972), 233, and his references in n. 141; Abū ʿAwāna, IV, 163; Ibn al-Jarūd, 496, also singles out the *yahūd banī hāritha* in his report on the expulsion of the Jews from Medina. Cf. Ibn al-Kalbī (Caskel), I, table 176, and II, 455 (Qaila). Abū ʿAḥaf: Maqrīzī, *Imtāʿ*, 103. Zuhra: Ibn al-Najjār, 323; Samhūdī, II, 319f., has the same tradition, but he omits any mention of their having been Jews. Closely connected with the Jews of Fadak were the B. Saʿd b. Bakr (of the Hawāzin). The Prophet had to send ʿAlī to attack them in order to prevent them from rushing to the aid of the Jews in Fadak (or Khaybar), see Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 1556; Ibn Saʿd, II (1), 65; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *Uyūn*, II, 109; Jafna and the other tribes: Ibn Hishām, 343; Mawṣilī, *Wasāʾil*, MS Cambridge Or Qq 33, fol. 79; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, II, 317; Samhūdī, I, 115, 126; II, 62, 152f.;

5. Offspring of the Banū Judhām

(10) Some traditions describe the Naḍīr and Qurayza, the two most important Jewish tribes in Medina, as descendants of the B. Judhām. We find such a tradition in Yaʿqūbī's chronicle, in the introduction to his version of the attack on the B. Naḍīr, whom he described as *fakhdhun min judhāma illā annahum tahawwadū wa-nazalū bi-jabalin yuqālu lahu al-naḍīru fa-summū bihi*: a clan of Judhām, only that they became Jewish: their name comes from the mountain on which they settled. A similar story is applied to the B. Qurayza about whom it is said that they converted to Judaism in ʿĀdiyā b. al-Samawāl's day, and settled on a mountain called Qurayza, after which they were named. It was said that Qurayza was actually their grandfather's name.

Masʿūdī also quotes an anonymous tradition which claims that the Naḍīr and Qurayza were the offspring of Judhām who had abandoned the paganism of the Amalekites and followed the law of Mūsā, and then migrated from Palestine (al-Shām) to Hijāz. Still another tradition makes the Naḍīr the offspring of Kināna and Khuzayma, and hence related to Judhām. Elsewhere in another tradition, the Naḍīr and Qurayza are said to be the offspring of al-Khazraj b. al-Ṣurayḥ (or Ṣarīḥ); Qurayza claiming to be descendants of Shuʿayb, the prophet who was sent to Madyan and who was also of Judhām. This is how it is recorded by Samhūdī, who says he found it in Ibn Ḥajar (al-ʿAsqalānī), who took it from ʿAbd al-Malik b. Yūsuf's *kitāb al-anwāʾ*. Mawhūb b. Rashīd al-Qurazī, i.e. one of the offspring of B. Qurayza, sings the praises of Suwāj, Akhārīj, and Batīl, evidently places in the land of Judhām.

In what follows, I shall endeavor to sort out the main details provided by Arab sources, related to Judhām, Shuʿayb, and Madyan (Shuʿayb having been the prophet sent to Madyan) and compare these details to what can be found in some non-Arab sources. I shall also try to find out who the Muslim traditionists were who preserved and spread these traditions.¹⁰

these matters are also relevant to the topic discussed below, of *kitāb al-umma*, the "Constitution of Medina" (section 35).

¹⁰ Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾrīkh*, II, 49, 52. Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 38 (1884), 158, assumed that the tradition is a reliable one, though noting that he never came across anything similar. Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 246. Hirschfeld, writing a year before Nöldeke, in *REJ*, 7 (1883), 309, n. 37, also cited this tradition. Kināna, etc.: see Balādhuri, *Ansāb*, I, 37; Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 1105. The tradition on Shuʿayb: Samhūdī, I, 113; Ibn al-Najjār, 325. Leszynski, 11, totally rejected this tradition. Hirschberg, *Yisrāʾel*, 167, assumed it to be the invention of the B. Qurayza, who wanted to prove their connections with the Arabs, through Shuʿayb and Madyan, which was said to be the homeland of the Banū Judhām. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-Aṣmaʿī, the author of the *k. al-anwāʾ* (see section 17 below), considered the tradition to be acceptable (*muḥtamal*), whereas Ibn Ḥajar said it was very far-fetched (*baʿīd jiddan*). Lammens, *Mél. Univ. St. Jos.*, 5 (1912), 597f., who cites Yaʿqūbī and Masʿūdī, stresses the credibility of these traditions. Mawhūb: Zamakhsharī, *Amkina*, 24; his version is: al-Qurayzī; it seems to me that, despite the unusual spelling, his version is more reliable than those of others, who have al-Qarīṭī (see e.g. Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh* III, 230, who explains that they belonged to the tribe of B. Qarīṭ, a branch of the B. Kilāb); apparently, some scholars have had the intention of covering up Mawhūb's Jewish origin.

6. Midian

(11) It was said of the B. Judhām that they lived north of Ḥijāz, in the region bordering on Palestine. Their center was Ḥismā and their land said to be Madyan, i.e. the biblical Midian. In around AD 570, Antoninus Martyr Placentinus mentions the Midianites whom he met in Abela (or Abila, or Ahela; apparently Eylat) on his way from Sinai to the Arabian Peninsula. Numbering 59 (or 80) clans, they thought of themselves as descendants of Jethro (cf. Shuʿayb of the above-mentioned Muslim tradition). The Midianite women bearing palm branches, anointed the soles and heads of the pilgrims with radish oil, while chanting *lingua Aegyptiaca: benedicti vos a Domino et benedictus adventus vester, hosanna in excelsis!*

Hamadānī's description of the Judhām's area apparently describes the situation as it was in the tenth century AD. According to him, it extended from Madyan to Tabūk, and further on to Adhruh. One of their clans lived in the vicinity of Tiberias and Lajjūn (Megiddo), Yamūn (?), and Acre. Their land included Tabūk, the mountains of Sharāh (Edom), Maʿān (Petra), Ayla, Maghār, and the Dārūm. Located between Ayla and the land of the B. Ghudra, it was referred to as "the wilderness of the B. Isrā'īl". In the south of Palestine, the B. Judhām intermingled with their 'brothers', the B. Lakhm. Between Ayla and the so-called wilderness, there was Iram, which meant "a rock". The B. Judhām also lived in the neighbourhood of Rafaḥ, where they had thriving date palms, particularly in Wādī Khawārij. Al-ʿArīsh was also inhabited by people of the B. Judhām. This is how the borders of the B. Judhām are described by Hamadānī: From Tabūk to the mountains of al-Sharāh (Edom), from there back to Eylat, and then to the camps of Maghār, and to the Dārūm.

Maqrīzī described Madyan as being located on *baḥr qulzum*, apparently meaning the Red Sea. It is six *marāḥil* from Tabūk. Some say that Madyan is the name of both a region and a city, while others claim it to be a tribe named for its ancestor Madyan; in some sources Madyan ibn Ibrāhīm. Although it is generally considered a non-Arabic name (*aʿjamī*), others claim that it is indeed an Arabic name.¹¹

¹¹ See Antoninus' *Itinerarium* in MPL, 72, 912f.; Tobler et Molinier, *Itinera*, I, 113f., 132; Hamdānī, *Jazīra*, I, 129f.; Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, 289, 446, 1122, 1214, 1247 also mentions Ḥismā, Kurā'u rabba, Marrūt, Maʿīn, ʿArad, Ghazza, Khabt, Munā, Bayt Zummarā'a. There was also Salāsil, which was a watering place, or a small river; see Zamakhsharī, *Amkina*, 129; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 111; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, I, 329f.; it is noteworthy that some Christian sources tend to identify the Midianites as Arabs. An anonymous Syriac chronicle goes so far as to explain the name al-Madīna as derived "from Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by Qenṭūra (!), also known as Yathrib"; see *Chronica minora* (ed. Guidi), 38; Hieronymus in Ez. xxv:1-3, MPL, 25, 244 states that the Midianites are *Israelitai et Agareni qui nunc Saraceni appellantur*...; Ghémond, 2, also calls the Arabs Midianites. For more information on Madyan and the locations of Judhām, see: Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 253; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 212, 267, 919f.; II, 794 (Thaghr); Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān*, 33; Wāqidi, 28, 555f., 990, 1032; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 135; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn*, II, 107 (on Ḥismā: the water of the flood persisted there for eighty years); Wüstenfeld, *Register*, 186. See also Abel, *Géogr. de la Pal.*, I, 285ff., and his references. Concerning Maghār ("the caves"), it is important to note that Josephus describes the Midianites as τρωγλοδύται (cave-dwellers); see *Ant.* ii:213, 257, 259; the land that Abraham bequeathed to the sons of Qetūra is called τρωγλοδύτης, *ibid.*, 213. As for Midian, it is "a city on the Red Sea", *ibid.*, 257.

7. Judhām

(12) An important clan among the B. Judhām were the B. Wā'il. The names Judhām and Wā'il repeatedly figure among the names of the Prophet's opponents during the raids on the north, to Mu'ta and Tabūk, and they are said to have been allies of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius. The sources also doubt the genealogy of the B. Judhām, saying that they were of the *musta'riba*, i.e., of those who joined the Arabs.

Hawdha b. Qays al-Wā'ilī and Abū 'Ammār al-Wā'ilī, together with others from this tribe, and the delegates appointed by the B. Naḍīr, headed by Ḥuyyay (probably Ḥunnay) b. Akḥṭab, formed the delegation to Mecca to participate in negotiations with the Prophet's opponents preceding the battle of the *khandaq*. Following the Tabūk expedition, a member of the B. Wā'il who had accepted Islam, was among those appointed to collect the quarter of the yield owed the Muslims by the Maqnā Jews.

The genealogy of the Judhām is as follows: Kahlān-Zayd-°Arīb-°Amr-Zayd-°Udad-Murra-al-Hārith-°Adī-Judhām. They are said to be brothers of Lakhm and were thus counted among the Yamanis, the southerners.

During the Umayyad period, in Yazīd's day, there were attempts to make them join the B. Asad and thus become part of the Qays northern coalition. Rawḥ b. Zinbā°, chief of the B. Judhām, agreed willingly but their older leader Nā'il (or Nā'il) b. Qays rebuked him in a very harsh manner. There is a great deal of information on the B. Judhām in the Prophet's time and even more from a later period, when they succeeded in penetrating the Palestinian interior and became the de facto rulers of its two *junds*, Filasṭīn and Urdunn. We have also noted that they settled in the Tiberias area; this undoubtedly pertains to the situation that emerged after the Arab conquest of Palestine and the days of the Umayyads. Not much is heard of them after the Abbasid revolution, when they were probably forced to move westwards into Sinai and Egypt and divested of any political power or influence.

The Jewish connection in the history of this tribe is well established. On the other hand, there was also a certain degree of Christian influence among them—an obvious inclination on the part of a tribe living on the edge of the Byzantine empire. Farwa b. °Amr b. al-Nāfira of the B. Judhām was appointed as the Byzantine governor over the Bedouin (*°amil al-rūm*) and was later put to death for accepting Islam.

The B. Judhām were criticized for collecting taxes at the entrance to the city, in much the same manner as the Jews of Yathrib. Zinbā°, (Rawḥ's father) was a tax collector (*°āshir*) for the B. Jafna in Palestine (al-Shām). The B. Jafna used to collect part of the gold which people from the Arabian Peninsula brought with them in their caravans. Shu'ayb was sent by God to admonish and warn the people. This was a matter of some urgency, as the people of Madyan, i.e. Judhām, were robbing travellers, falsifying weights

and measures, and what was even worse, collecting tithes to which they were not entitled.¹²

8. *Shu'ayb*

(13) *Shu'ayb* is a Qur'anic personality (vii: 83-91; x: 85-98; xxvi: 176-189; xxix: 35-36), who was sent to Madyan and al-Ayka to demand that the inhabitants respect the law and refrain from falsifying weights and measures. The people of Ayka called him a liar, saying that he was bewitched. According to the traditions, he was of the B. Judhām, from the sub-tribe of the B. Wā'il. When messengers came to the Prophet, he greeted members of the B. Judhām with the words "Welcome to the people of *Shu'ayb*"! *Shu'ayb* is said to have been none other than the biblical Jethro or one of his relatives, possibly Jethro's uncle; but it is *Shu'ayb* who is Moses' father-in-law. Moses received the staff taken from the myrtle in the Garden of Eden from him. He was a descendant of Madyan b. Ibrahim, went blind, and was the only prophet whom God sent to two nations. His genealogy is *Shu'ayb*–*Nawfal*–*Ra'ū'il*–*Murr*–*Ayfa*–*Madyan*–*Ibrahim*. The biblical names *Re'ū'el* and *Eyfa* (Gen. xxvi: 1-4, 1 Chr. I: 33,35) come to light here. Other versions are: *Shu'ayb* b. *Mikā'il*, or b. *Nū'ib*, or b. *Nū'il*, or b. *Yūbab*, or b. *Šifur*, or b. *Ya'far* (A'far?), or b. *Yashjur*, or b. *Tawīd* b. *Raghū'il*, or b. *Malakā'in*.¹³

¹² Banū Wā'il: Ibn Hishām, 669 (cf. p. 391); Wāqidī, 441; Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, I, 1464; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *Uyūn*, II, 55. (Though obviously of no great relevance to the topic at hand, the etymological correspondence of Wā'il to Hebrew Yō'el is interesting.) The tax of Maqnā: Wāqidī, 1032; cf. Musil, *Northern Heḡāz*, 114, n. 30. On the genealogy of Judhām and their history, see Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, 1201; Balādhūri, *Ansāb*, I, 36f.; Isbahānī, *Aghānī*, VIII, 182; Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Istī'āb*, II, 502; Warrām, II, 102 (Rawḥ b. Zinbā' belonged to the Azd, the 'southerners'); Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, I, 330-334, who cites the opinion of the Egyptian specialists in genealogy, to the effect that the B. Judhām originally belonged to the B. 'Adnān. Where others have Zayd b. 'Amr b. 'Arīb, one of the forefathers of Judhām (the ancient 'father' of the 'northerners'), he has Zayd b. Yashjab. See also his *Nihāya*, 205ff. See the comprehensive discussion on the B. Judhām by Lammens, *Mél. Univ. St. Jos.*, 5 (1912), 589-619. On the status of the B. Judhām in Palestine, see Gil, *Hist. of Pal.*, according to the Index. Some sources mention the opinion that the Judhām were the offspring of A'sar, or Ya'fur b. Madyan b. Ibrahim, which is said to be the origin of *Shu'ayb* (see *infra*); see Qalqashandī, *Subḥ*, I, 331, and the note *ibid*. On the conversion of the B. Judhām to Judaism: Ya'qūbī, *Ta'riḫh*, I, 298. On Christian influence and the matter of the governor: Ibn Sa'd, I (2), I, 26, 83; an often-quoted tradition has it that Jesus will descend to earth again, break the crosses, kill the pigs, and marry a woman of the Judhām, see e.g. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *Uyūn*, I, 66; Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, IV, 1201; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 825; Samhūdī, II, 370, Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, I, 188; cf. Lammens, *ibid.*, 603f., 611f.; B. Judhām criticized: Abū'l-Baqā', MS BL Add 23,269, fol. 11; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, I, 185f. See the comprehensive article on the B. Judhām by Hasson, *SI*, 81:5, 1995.

¹³ Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, I, 187f., 331; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 389; b. Yūbab; Ya'qūbī, *Ta'riḫh*, I, 32; b. Nū'ib; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 825; Suhaylī, *Rawḍ*, I, 73, n. 2; Samhūdī, II, 269; Ibn al-Jawzī, MS Bodl Marsh 551, fol. 29; Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, I, 365; some say that he was not the offspring of Abraham, but one of his followers; his grandmother was Lot's daughter; *ibid.*, p. 370. The principal sin of his people was that they counterfeited coins (*qafū 'l-darāhima*); Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, I, 93 and III, 301; his language was Arabic; Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, 510; Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, IV, 1201; *Shu'ayb* was of the B. Wā'il b. Judhām; Qudā'ī, MS Bodl Marsh 37, fol. 13a; Thabrūn (should be: Yathrūn) b. Šifūr; Suhaylī, *Ta'riḫh*, MS India Office 4110, fol. 19b; *Shu'ayb* b. Šifūr; some say: *Shu'ayb* Malalā'in; the Prophet complimented the clan (*rahḡ*) of *Shu'ayb*, the fathers-in-law (*akhtān*) of Mūsā; Ibn Wahb al-Qurashī, *Jāmi'*, I; Sibṭ

9. Balaam-Balak-Jethro

(14) It would not be far from the truth if we claimed that behind the descriptions and genealogy attributed to Shu'ayb, lies the figure of the biblical Bil'am, who is also somehow bracketed with Balak, king of Moab. Three biblical versions of his father's name can be discerned, despite their garbled forms in the sources. One of them seems to stem from Ba'ur, another is Šifūr (which is generally properly preserved), and a third derives from Hübāb. These are respectively Be'or, father of Bil'am, Šippōr, father of Balak, and Hōbāb, the son of Re'ū'ēl the Midianite, that is, Moses' father-in-law (see Num.xxii-xxiii; x:29). Bil'am is known in the Midrash as a prophet sent to both the Moabites and the Midianites; although the biblical story refers to Moab, the elders of Midian are mentioned twice (see Num. xx:4,7) which Josephus was also aware of. Whereas the Muslim tradition has it that Shu'ayb went blind, the Midrash says that Balaam was blind in one eye, referring to "the speech of the man who had his eye shut" (Num. xxiv:3). The Midrash also mentions his having to do with falsifying weights, though it is in quite a different manner from the references in the Muslim tradition: "God said to Balaam (concerning the seven altars he erected): you wicked man, what are you doing? And Balaam replied: I erected seven altars, etc., just like the banker who lies about his weights and is caught by the overseer of the market", etc. The Midrash makes him out to be a sorcerer whereas in the Qur'ān, he is said to have been bewitched (*min al-musahharin*, xxiv:185, but the phrase may have formerly been *min al-musahhirin*, a sorcerer).

It is difficult to explain how a biblical "prophet of the gentiles" named Balaam (Bil'am) turned into Shu'ayb of the B. Judhām. This process may have had something to do with the elements *am* and *sha'b* respectively. Shu'ayb is a diminutive meaning "a small people"; Bil'am is a negligible people (*Bil'am be-lō am*), says the Midrash. *Balaam hic qui interpretatur populus vanus*, says Origenes. As he was a prophet sent to the Midianites, with whom the Judhām identified themselves, it is easy to understand how he became linked with Jethro and how Re'ū'ēl and Hōbāb, the other biblical names attributed to the Midianite priest, infiltrated into the genealogies of Shu'ayb.¹⁴

Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh*, MS BL Or 4215, fol. 102b; Abū'l-Fidā': *Mukhtaṣar*, I, 18: some say he was a descendant of a believer in Abraham (but not of Abraham himself); Fāsi, *Shifā'*, I, 352: b. Tawīd; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, I, 184: b. Nu'īb, or b. Šifūr; Tha'labī, *Qisṣa*, 115: b. Šifūr, or b. Mikā'il b. Yashjur; his Aramaic (Suryānī) name was Yitrūn; his mother was Mik'il, Lot's daughter; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb*, I, 246 (no. 654): b. Mikā'il b. Tashkur; he was sent to two nations, Madyan and al-Ayka: in his old age, he was blind; Suyūṭī, *Mu'tarak*, III, 277, quoting Nawawī: b. Mikā'il b. Yashjun; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, II, 154.

¹⁴ See BT, *Sanhedrin*, 105a; *Yalqūt Shim'ōnī*, nos. 765ff.; Jos. Fl., *Ant.* iv:104; the readings Mikā'il, Malalā'in (see previous note), as Shu'ayb's father, may perhaps represent Berakh'el, said to be Bil'am's father; see PT, *Sōṭā* v, 20d. On Elihū b. Berakhel the Buzite of Job xxxii:2ff, it says there, in the name of R. 'Aqiva: "This Elihū is Bil'am b. Berakhel, who came to curse Israel, but blessed them". Or perhaps Qemū'el (son of Nāhōr), with whom the Midrash identified Bil'am; cf. Ginzberg, *Leg. of the J.*, VI, 123f., n. 722. On Hōbāb, see Mazar, *JNES*, xxiv:299, 1965. See also Origenis in Numeros Homilia xiv, *MPG* 12, col. 682; cf. Urbach, *Tarbīz*, 25 (1955/6), 273, n. 5. It seems that, in antiquity, the Hebrew pro-

10. *The sons of Jethro*

(15) It is enlightening to pursue the Jewish sources on this subject. Some of these sources mention Jews living amongst the Arabs, such as we find in the Mishnā: “Arab women go about veiled”, i.e., Jewish women living in Arabia go out on the sabbath veiled; and in the Palestinian Talmud (in the name of R. Samuel b. Nahman, from R. Jonathan): “people in Arabia used to collect (the sum mentioned in the *ketubba*, i.e. what is due to a widow or a divorcee) from spices or camels” (i.e. by selling the spices or camels belonging to the late husband). Even more significant are the traditions on the Sons of Jethro, the Kenites. The Targum calls the Kenites, sons of Jethro, Salamians: “the sons of Salmā’a Moses’ father-in-law, went up from the city of Jericho together with the sons of Judah, to the wilderness of Judah which is south of ʿArad; they went and sat together with (the Jewish) people”. Salmā is included in the list of the sons of Judah (I Chr, ii), as the father of Bethlehem, and perhaps also considered father of the Kenites, who are mentioned further in those lists; Ezra ii:46 mentions the sons of Shalmāi (Hebrew Bible: Shamlai), rendered by the Septuagint (Lucian) as Σελამει just like in Neh. vii:48. In Esdras v:30, they are called υἱοὶ Συβαεί in most of the versions, but there is also the version: Σαλαμει. Σαλαμοι and Σαλμηνοι are the names of Arab tribes, both in inscriptions and in Stephan Byzantinus (sixth century AD).¹⁵

(16) In other words, the Targum viewed Jethro’s people, the Kenites, as Arabs, much like the Christian sources mentioned above. Other sources, however, considered the Kenites, the “sons of Jethro”, proselytes, who enjoyed a status equal to that of any other Jews. On the Mishnā quotation “the proselyte brings (the first fruits) but does not read”, two sages of the Palestinian Talmud, R. Yona and R. Yasa (fourth century) said, quoting R. Samuel b. R. Isaac, that it referred to “the sons of Qēnī, Moses’ father-in-law, who both bring and read”. (‘Reading’ refers to the phrase on the first fruits, “which the Lord hath sworn unto our fathers to give unto us”, since that would be improper for the offspring of non-Jews.) As the Bible says (Num. x:29) “come thou with us, and we will do thee good”. “The descendants of b. ʿAshtūr who are proselytes and sons of proselytes, used to say: ‘God of our ancestors’”. Benjamin b. ʿAshtūr, is said to have claimed that “does not read” (of the Mishnā) refers only to the offspring of a Jewish mother and a gentile father. We may draw the conclusion that the Kenites, or Jethro’s offspring, were considered clear-cut examples of the proselytes, generally enjoying a status equal to that of the offspring of Israel. There are several

nunciation of the name Reʿuʿēl was with a *ghayn*, since Jos. Fl. wrote: Raguel, e.g. *Ant.* vi:140. Muslim traditions tell of a slave owned by Shuʿayb, Dhū Mahdam, called Rughāl (or Righāl); some say he was a wicked man, a tax collector; others say he was a messenger of God, Abū Rughāl. See Balādhuri, *Ansāb*, I, 25f. The Prophet ordered the grave of Abū Rughāl to be stoned. The nickname of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf was “the slave of Abū Rughāl”. In addition, Abū Rughāl is said to have been the one who showed Abraham the way to Mecca; see Ibn Hishām, 32.

¹⁵ Mishnā, *Shabbāt*, vi:6; PT, *Ketubbōt*, x:33d; see the Palestinian Targum to Numbers xxiv:21, 22; Ps. Jon. to Ju. i:16. IV Esdras v:30 (Tedeschi ed.); Steph. Byz., 550; cf. Moritz, *Abh.*, Göttingen 1916, 42.

talmudic sources which bear this out; it is said of Jethro's offspring that they have even become members of the Sanhedrin, in the "chamber of hewn stone" (*lishkat ha-gāzīt*) and some of their offspring even became high priests. The impression derived from these sources is that during the Byzantine period, there was a well-known and established category of proselytes of Arab descent, known as the "Sons of Jethro". The affinity with the Muslim sources on the subject of the Jewish tribes and the clans of Hijāz, as well as their connections with B. Judhām, the inhabitants of Madyan and kinsfolk of Shu'ayb, who is both Bil'am and Jethro, cannot be ignored. We have seen that a similar parallelism exists between the Jewish and the Muslim sources regarding the matter of the refugees who fled from the Romans (most probably in AD 70, and perhaps also in AD 135) to Arabia.

To sum up, it was these refugees who formed the first stratum of a Jewish population in northern Hijāz. Apparently during the succeeding centuries, they increased in number owing to the Arab tribes who converted and adopted an agricultural way of life, taking over the Jews' religion and lifestyle, as well as their spoken language—Aramaic.¹⁶

11. *Baṣrians against Ibn Ishāq*

(17) The nature and origin of the Jews of Yathrib seems to have been a source of dissension between the early Muslim authors and compilers of traditions, one of which became a very heated conflict between Ibn Ishāq and Mālik b. Anas. The latter styled the former a kind of Satan, *dajjāl min al-dajājila*, who propagated traditions taken from the Jews. It should be remembered that Mālik b. Anas, unlike Ibn Ishāq, was an enemy of the Abbasids, the rulers of the caliphate, and an admirer of the Spanish Umayyad caliph, Hishām b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, who warmly reciprocated these feelings. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās explains Mālik's anger as stemming from the fact that Ibn Ishāq used to accept traditions from the offspring of the Jews who were forced to convert to Islam and that it was they who preserved the account of events in Khaybar, the traditions on Qurayṣa and Naḍir, and similar stories which they had received from their predecessors.

The tradition preserved in Samhūdī on the Naḍir and Qurayṣa's descent from the Judhām and Shu'ayb was taken, as stated above, from the *kitāb al-anwā'* which he ascribed to 'Abd al-Malik b. Yūsuf, as copied by Ibn Ḥajar (al-'Asqalānī), who declared this tradition utterly improbable. One may safely assume that 'Abd al-Malik b. Yūsuf was actually 'Abd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-Aṣma'i, the Baṣrian (Yūsuf being most likely a copyist's error), whose *kitāb al-anwā'* is mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm. Ibn Ḥajar points out that Qurayb was his father's *laqab*, whose real name was 'Aṣim. Al-Aṣma'i

¹⁶ See BT, *Sanhedrin*, 104a, 106a; *Pesiqatā de-R. Kahana* (Mandelbaum ed.), I, 36; *Sifrē Zūṭā* (Horovitz ed.), 263ff.; *Mekhilta de-R. Shim'on* (Hoffmann ed.), 92; *Mekhilta de-R. Ishmael* (Ish-Shalom ed.), 60b (referring to Yonadav b. Rekhev); Targum to I Chr., ii:55: "The Salamians, sons of Sippora, who are from the tribe of Levi, of the seed of Moses..." (cf. the genealogy of the Jewish tribes of Medina, *supra*, section 6); *Sifrē, be-ha'alotekha* (Horovitz ed.), 72ff.; *Tanḥūmā, wa-yaqhel*, viii; *Yalqūt ha-Makhīrī* to Isaiah (Kahana-Spira eds.), 195. See also Ginzberg, *Leg. of the J.*, III, 380; VI, 133f., nn. 782, 783.

died in AD 828 (at the age of 88), while Mālik b. Anas died in approximately AD 800. The two were in the habit of citing one another's traditions.

A parallel tradition preserved by Mas'ūdī, is included in a fragment copied by him from 'Umar b. Shabba al-Numayrī, who died in AD 877. 'Umar b. Shabba al-Numayrī was also a contemporary of al-Aṣma'ī (although somewhat younger), and was in the habit of quoting him on the traditions of the Jews. According to him, Moses and Aaron made the pilgrimage to Mecca and spent some time in Yathrib, where they were forced to stay in hiding in order to avoid the Jews who were intent on doing them harm. Aaron died in Yathrib and Moses buried him in nearby Uḥud.¹⁷

(18) A much-quoted source in Samhūdī, on Jewish matters as well, is Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Zubāla, who wrote a history of the city of Medina (AD 814). He was one of Mālik b. Anas' pupils as well as one of 'Umar b. Shabba's sources. Thus one gets the distinct impression that the views and information held by the early Muslim community of Medina, as accepted and presented by Mālik b. Anas, were both adopted and disseminated by some of his younger Baṣrian contemporaries. At least on the subject of the Jews of Medina, it was these Baṣrians who preserved the traditions on their origins from proselytes—traditions which differed from those of Ibn Ishāq. The tendency and spirit of their traditions are still alive in Ibn Khaldūn's description: "In those days the people of the Torah among the Arabs were Bedouin ... most of them came from Ḥimyar; they accepted the Jewish religion, and even after they became Muslims, they kept their former views" (by which he is trying to prove that the early interpreters of the Qur'ān adopted many traditions from the Jews of Medina, who were far from being great scholars). Elsewhere he criticizes Ibn Ishāq for quoting a tradition predicting the duration of Islam, based on the numerical value of letters, in the name of Ḥuyyay b. Akḥṭab and his brother Abū Yāsir (leaders of the B. Naḍīr). This matter, says Ibn Khaldūn, has little to do with nature or reason; "Abu Yāsir and his brother Ḥuyyay were not exactly the sort of people whose opinions should be used as an argument nor were they Jewish sages, they were simply Bedouin of Ḥijāz, ignorant in matters of crafts and sciences, and even of their own law or the legal aspects (*fiqh*) of their book and religion".

¹⁷ Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *Uyūn*, I, 16ff.; he cites details with regard to reciprocal slanders between Mālik and Ibn Ishāq, concerning personal matters, such as Mālik's descent, whether he was of pure Arab origin, and the like. Cf. Kister, *JSAI*, 8 (1986), 76f., who considers such arguments to constitute the principal cause of the conflict. On Mālik's attitude toward the Abbasids, see Dozy, *Histoire*, I, 286f.; Goldziher, *MW*, 53 (1963), 286; see also: Šafadī, *Waḡayāt*, II, 189 (no. 550); another explanation of the conflict between Ibn Ishāq and Mālik is found in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Intiqā'*, 11: Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq claimed that Mālik and his father's family were *mawālī* of the B. Tamīm b. Murra, whereas Mālik claimed descent from Dhū Aṣbah the Ḥimyarite; see also Suhaylī, *Rawḍ*, I, 39; Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh*, VI, 377; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdaḍī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 223f.; on al-Aṣma'ī and his *k. al-anwā'*, see: Ibn al-Nadīm, 55; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, VI, 415; see al-Harawī, 82, who saw the grave of al-Aṣma'ī in Baṣra. See also Ibn al-Anbārī, 112-124; the article al-Aṣma'ī in *EP*² (B. Lewin); 'Umar b. Shabba: Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, VII, 460; Ibn Khallikān, III, 463; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, VI, 48; Ibn Shabba was one of the principal sources of both Ṭabarī and Samhūdī (who cites him as Abū Zayd); see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 345. The tradition on Moses and Aaron: Samhūdī, I, 112f.; Wüstenfeld, *Gesch. d. St. Med.*, 29, ascribes this story to Ibn Zubāla, but it is actually from Ibn Shabba.

Thus we find that those few fragments preserved in the Muslim sources describing the Jewish tribes of Yathrib as offspring of the proselytes, were part of a specific trend in Islamic interpretation. We still do not know the extent of the basic points at issue between Ibn Ishāq and Mālik but it is evident that the origin of the Jews of Medina was one of the major arguments in this dispute; which serves to explain the clear-cut difference between Ibn Ishāq's accounts and those of the Baṣrian followers of Mālik b. Anas.¹⁸

¹⁸ See Samhūdī, I, 7, 252. Ibn Zubāla was one of the followers (*aṣḥāb*) of Mālik b. Anas; he finished his book in Ṣafar, AH 199 (September-October 814); cf. El-Ali, *JC*, 35 (1961), 66; see Ibn Khaldūn, *Muq.*, 332, 439.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONSTITUTION OF MEDINA

1. *An agreement between the leader and his disciples*

(19) The document known by this name is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable and fundamental in the history of ancient Islam. It should be seen as no less than the first formulation of the principles that were to guide the Muslim community on the verge of its ideological struggle. The changes in the organization of the clans living in the city of Medina were the point of departure for the long-protracted historical process in the course of which Islam was transformed into one of the great world religions.

It is therefore surprising to discover that the aims of this document were entirely practical. From a contemporary standpoint, it contains little that can be ascribed to the religious sphere. Naturally one must bear in mind how difficult it is to differentiate between the religious and other aspects of life in the history of early Islam, as it is in so many early historical annals.

As we shall see in the continuation, this document encompasses a number of central issues: the first steps aimed at replacing the old tribal bonds with others more attuned to the nature of the new community of *mu'mins*, as well as the beginnings of a new judicial system suited to the community's character and the need to ensure that funds would be available for the raids and battles that were soon to take place. The fighters who were about to go into battle would have to know who would redeem them from captivity or pay blood-money if the campaign was ill-fated. In addition, there were matters related to the Jews which were shaped by the issues mentioned above but which also influenced them in turn.

How should we define this document? The Muslim sources generally referred to it as a form of pact between the Muslims and the Jews, and I shall examine this point when discussing the Jewish aspects of the document. At this stage, however, one questions whether it really was a treaty altogether. Caetani has already expressed his doubts on the matter, for if it had been a treaty or a covenant, it would have contained the parties' oaths and pledges towards one another. His opinion was that it is a completely unilateral document written solely by Muḥammad. Wellhausen, however, considered it to be an oral agreement (which was recorded later on) and preferred to call it *Erläss* (Caetani: *ordinanza*). It is also my view that the document cannot really be construed as a decree imposed by one party on the other. As an analysis of both the circumstances in which it was conceived and as its contents will show, it is definitely a negotiated agreement between the leader when he was recognized as such, and his followers, at a stage in

which his authority was as yet not so deeply based as to permit him to establish his own views by the stroke of a pen.¹⁹

2. *A general description of the 'Constitution'*

(20) The term *ṣaḥīfa* which is found in the latter part of the document (par. 31, 32), proves that it was indeed a written one; moreover, it indicates that the Arab clans mentioned there formally accepted it. According to Watt, the Jews accepted this as well but this is far from obvious, as I shall try to prove below.

Actually the word *ṣaḥīfa* is a synonym of *kitāb*, also in Ethiopic. The fact that this designation was also applied to "the holy books of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā" is irrelevant, as the word *ṣaḥīfa* also meant a 'sheet'; this is how it is used in Wāqidi, *wa-aḥḍara 'l-ṣaḥīfata wa 'l-dawāta* (and he ordered the *ṣaḥīfa* and ink to be brought to him) when Muḥammad is on the verge of signing the agreement with the Banū Ghatafān.

There are a number of facts which help to establish the document's authenticity: firstly there are innumerable archaisms which were puzzling even to the first generation of copyists. As Caetani puts it, Ibn Ishāq himself could not understand it and therefore did not attempt to make corrections. The language is very difficult; Serjeant even assumed that the proper understanding of this document would contribute to a better understanding of the Qur'ān. If it was the work of a forger, he would not have expressed the paragraphs dealing with non-Muslims in such a confused and vague manner nor would he have retained anti-Qurashite comments and allotted Muḥammad himself such a relatively modest role.²⁰

3. *Traditions relating to the document and its preservation*

(21) The *ḥadīth* literature includes several traditions related to some mysterious document (or parts of it) preserved by the Prophet or by ʿAlī, containing statements about blood-money and the interdiction against killing a Muslim in retaliation for a *kāfir*. Some paragraphs from our document can be easily recognized in these traditions. According to some sources, the text was preserved in the sheath (*jaḥn*) of the Prophet's famous sword, *dhū'l-faḡār*, that was subsequently handed over to ʿAlī. One of the latter's descendants, Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan (*al-naḥs al-zakiyya*, *al-mahdī*) had this sword with him when he fell in battle in AD 762 at the

¹⁹ See the best-known version of the document, in Ibn Hishām, 341ff.; *infra*, in the Appendix, the reader will find this version, translated by me (the translation is obviously based on my interpretations as set forth in this chapter). The references to the document correspond to the paragraph numbers printed in the translation thereof. On the 'secular' nature of the document, cf. also Serjeant, *IQ*, 8 (1964), 3f.; see also: Caetani, I, 393; Wellhausen, *Sk. u. Vorarb.*, IV, 82f.

²⁰ On the *ṣaḥīfa*, cf. Watt, *Muh. at Medina*, 225, 228; Ethiopic, see Dillmann, *Lexicon*, 1266f.; on the books of Ibrāhīm and Mūsā, see Hamidullah, *Le prophète*, I, 123; Wāqidi, 477; Serjeant, *IQ*, 8 (1964), 14; and see also *ibid.*, 3; Caetani, I, 392.

hands of ʿĪsā b. Mūsā, the uncle of the second Abbasid caliph, Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr, evidently when the document was no longer in the sheath.

Ṭabarī has similar information. In describing the events of the second year of the *hijra*, he also says that it was in that year that the Prophet wrote the regulations about blood-money (*maʿāqil*) and that they were attached to his sword. Other traditions which also noted the attachment to the sword, mention what it contained and usually refer to some of the statements in our version of the document, although here and there we encounter additions that are apparently figments of the imagination. Like Ṭabarī, some refer to the matter of ransom (*maʿāqil*); the redemption of prisoners (*ḥikāk al-asīr*); the interdiction against slaying a Muslim in retaliation for a *kāfir*; the denunciation of those who make sacrifices in the name of idols as well as of those who provide refuge to a criminal; the matter of the *ḥarām* of Medina; the subject of prohibiting a marriage without a guardian; the mutual responsibility of Muslim for Muslim, and other similar matters. Most of these are expressed in the same wording as in the document or are stylistically similar.

The traditions on ʿAlī's preservation of the sword and its hidden message in the sheath, usually tell that when asked if he had any of the Prophet's writings that were not known to the common people, he replied that there was nothing left, except the Qurʾān and 'that *ṣaḥīfa*' which contains the rules concerning blood-money (*ʿaql*), and the ransoming of prisoners (*ḥikāk al-asīr*), which could be found in the sheath of the Prophet's sword.

It is also said that when the caliph Marwān b. al-Ḥakam was addressing the people, he mentioned the *ḥaram* of Mecca but not that of Medina. Rāfiʿ b. Ḥudayj interrupted him, saying that the Prophet had declared Medina *ḥarām*. "We have it written in *adīm khawlānī*" (Khawlān leather). Marwān remained silent for a while and said: "I have heard something about it".²¹

²¹ See Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, I, 1367; Ibn Saʿd, I (2), 172; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 145: the sword belonged to a Meccan, al-ʿĀṣ b. Munabbih; ʿAlī killed him in the Battle of Badr and took it from him. So also Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, 175; Yāfiʿī, *Mirʾāḥ*, I, 104: al-ʿĀṣ b. Nabīh; according to another version, the abovementioned Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh owed a merchant from Medina 400 dinars. Before he fell in battle, he gave the sword to that merchant, asking him to pass it on to one of the offspring of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who would repay the debt to him. From that merchant, the sword made its way to the Abbasids; see Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, III, 247; Yāfiʿī, *Ghirbāl*, MS Paris 1593, IV, 69. Dhahabī, *Taʾrīkh*, III, 38: the *ṣaḥīfa* was kept by ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ, whom the Prophet entrusted with it. That ʿAbdallāh was ʿAmr's son by Hind b. Munabbih, i.e. the nephew of the abovementioned al-ʿĀṣ, who was the original owner of the sword. See Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 313 (which shows that ʿAmr, later the conqueror of Egypt, had married his father's sister; moreover, it is hard to believe that his son ʿAbdallāh was born in the Prophet's time; he might have inherited the *ṣaḥīfa* from his father). The sword was called *dhū'l-faḡār* because of the notches in it, 18 in number; this is stated in the abovementioned sources; see also Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, III, 247: ʿAbd al-Malik b. Qurayb al-Aṣmaʿī, the well-known author, saw the sword with Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, and it indeed had 18 notches; so also Samhūdī, II, 106f., who cites al-Maṭarī, author of a history of Medina (died AD 1340); see also the article *Dhū'l-Faḡār* (by E. Mittwoch) in *IEJ*. The answer of ʿAlī: Bukhārī, *Adab*, 5; *idem*, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *bāb ḥaram al-madīna*, and also: *al-diyyāt*, *bāb al-ʿāqila*; Ibn Māja, II, 887; Abū Daʿūd, *Sunan*, IV, 303; Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ*, *bāb la yuqatal muslim bi-kāfir*; al-Baghawī, II, 65 (the version of al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh* (ed. Badrān), III, 17; Ṭiḥāwī, *Muʿtaṣar*, II, 126, 128; ʿAzīzī, *Sirāj*, II, 57, 113; III, 378; Mālik, *Muwatāʾ*, 226 (no. 663), 317 (no. 891); Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ*, III, 246, 361; V, 165; VI, 181; IX, 20. The speech of Marwān: al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *Taqyīd al-ʿilm*,

(22) There is also some evidence in the traditions as to where the document was written. It was in the house of Anas b. Mālik, who is believed to have said: "the Messenger of God made an alliance (*ḥalafa*) between Quraysh and the Anṣār in my house". Serjeant has suggested that the document may have come into ʿAbdallah b. al-Ḥasan's possession, when he was chief of the ʿAlids, and who seems to have been Ibn Ishāq's major source. In fact, the chain of tradition (*isnād*) relating to the document which Ibn Hishām omitted, is to be found in Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, and goes back until Kathīr Ibn ʿAbdallah b. ʿAmr (b. ʿAwf) al-Muzanī. The *ḥadīth* which says that the *ṣulḥ* (reconciliation) is permitted only between Muslims was attributed to Kathīr, and actually recalls what is written in our document, despite the garbled version (par. 8, 15, 34; from here onward the numbers in parenthesis refer to paragraphs of the document, as it appears in the appendix to this chapter, containing the original text and translation). There is also a tradition that Kathīr was the Prophet's appointee over the *ḥarām* of Medina. It seems that Kathīr's father, ʿAbdallah, was also held in great esteem by the Prophet and his grave was one of the five which the Prophet ever visited, while one of the Prophet's first prayer-sites was situated close to ʿAbdallah's clan.²²

4. The unity of the document

(23) As was the case with regard to so many ancient literary sources, attempts have been made to analyze it through the "method of the sources" within the framework described by Watt as "a hypothesis of its development", which supposed that the document was the outcome of gradual composition and repeated editing. Hamidullah assumes that there existed a

72, and see *ibid.*, the list of parallel sources compiled by the editor; one may add: Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ*, X, 193f.; *adīm* is manufactured leather; see Burāqī, 42; Khawlān, in Yemen (north of Najrān), is famous for its leather; see Hamdānī, *Jazīra*, 114, and see the map in Forrer, *Sūdārabien*, 279. See also Samhūdī, I, 64: *fa-akhraja min baṭni'l-sayfi adaman ʿarabiyyan*. In another version, the *ṣaḥīfa* contained regulations concerning the sanctity of Mecca (!), as well as *sunan* concerning camels and *jirāḥāt* (wounds); see the sources in Sprenger, *Journal of the Asiatic Soc. of Bengal*, 25 (1857), 318. See more fragments of the *ṣaḥīfa*, sometimes garbled, as preserved in various sources: (in the name of Jābir: the Prophet wrote how much each clan had to pay for its blood-money, and also stated that no *mawlā* shall be appointed over a tribe unless the tribespeople agree; (in the name of the Prophet:) the Muslims observe reciprocity in their houses, and even the most humble among them grants protection on their behalf, and they show solidarity against non-Muslims, nor do they kill a Muslim for a *kāfir*; see Tihāwī, *Muʿtaṣar*, II, 108, 126; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, XIII, 249: a discussion on the *ḥadīth lā nikāḥa illā bi-walī* (protection by marriage shall only be granted to a woman if her clan permits it). Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ*, IX, 20: the *ṣaḥīfa* contained rules about camels and rules about wounds; and the *ḥarām* of Medina; and the matter of rebellion (*ḥadath*); and the specification that protection by Muslims is egalitarian and can be granted even by the most humble of Muslims; and the specification that whoever offends a Muslim will be cursed by God, etc. See also a broader review on the *ṣaḥīfas* in Muslim tradition, in Goldziher, *Muh. St.*, II, 7ff.

²² The place where it was written: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, III, 224; Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ*, VIII, 362. See Serjeant's view: *IQ*, 8 (1964), 4; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn*, I, 197; see on Kathīr, whose traditions are considered unreliable (*daʿīf*): Dhahabī, *Mizān*, III, 406f.; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 127, 851, cites from Wāqidi: Kathīr should have died in the days of Muʿāwiya's caliphate. On ʿAbdallah, see Samhūdī, II, 3f., 87f.

separate document dealing with the Jews, parts of which were lost and other parts absorbed into the document in its present form, which is the combination of two independent sources.

Serjeant went much further than that and was of the opinion that the document is "not one document, but no less than eight separate agreements". If my assumption is correct, Serjeant based this view on the echoes of the document which can be found in later Islamic tradition, some of which we have encountered above. It should be remembered, however, that the compilers of the *ḥadīth* collections arranged the traditions according to a legalistic classification and that it was inevitable that parts of the document would find their way into different sections of these collections. These passages and parts of passages have that fragmentary and often deteriorated form in which components of the *kitāb* were preserved in the oral tradition, while the original text, which was hidden for several generations, was known to very few. What happened at this point was the dissolution of the document; what was remembered was integrated into the collections of traditions, and there is actually no validity in the idea that there may have been a reverse process, i.e. the composition of the document on the basis of passages drawn from the collections of traditions.

Hence, in contrast to the scholars mentioned above, I view the document as both a genuine and cohesive one, based on the strong links between its elements. This becomes clear when its contents are analyzed. The short phrases and paragraphs concentrate on a limited number of ideas representing Muḥammad's immediate political aims at the onset of his struggle, which in the main were ideas of a political and military nature.

As a rule, when an ancient literary source is submitted to the "method of the sources", the burden of proof should rest with those who argue against its unity and authenticity. Repetitions, abrupt and unexpected entries of new elements and linguistic variations cannot serve as adequate arguments. Certainly not where Muḥammad is concerned, for these are well-known characteristics of his style, known to us from the Qur'ān.²³

5. *The time of the document*

(24) Some scholars were inclined to date the document to a period after the battle of Badr (March, AD 624, some twenty months after the *hijra*, which occurred in June, AD 622), as it contains a recognition of Muḥammad's authority and a hint at the holy war: *fi sabīli 'llāhi*. Other scholars, however, considered the fact that the Jews were still included in the *umma* as evidence in favour of an earlier period. Grimme, for instance, assumed that the *kitāb* was written after Badr; for it was only then that the rupture with Quraysh became so marked; this is evidenced by the strong antagonism to Quraysh expressed in the document. This view seems to underestimate the Prophet's capacity for political planning. Fighting Quraysh was not, after all, an incidental caprice and the act which preceded it, i.e. leaving Mecca,

²³ Hamidullah, *Le prophète*, I, 128f.; Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, 226; Serjeant, *Mél. T. Husain*, 48; see also: Watt, in *Cambr. Hist. of Isl.*, I, 41: "...this document seems to be conflated from two or more separate documents".

the *hijra*, was sufficiently serious: it was in fact the abandoning of Mecca which marked the first step in Muḥammad's war.

Tor Andrae considered the document as dating from the second year after the *hijra*, perhaps owing to the fact that, according to his concept, it represented the second phase in the evolution of Islam, when it became something more than a religion: i.e., a sort of brotherhood. On the other hand, one may say that it was the brotherhood and the readiness to fight for new causes that were the motivating forces behind the growth and spread of the new religion. At the very least, the two aspects were closely linked. Buhl was of the opinion that the document reflected the fact that the Prophet despaired of the Jews joining him and should therefore be dated to a later period, rather than nearer the *hijra*. Following in his footsteps, Watt states "not earlier than the year 5" (AD 627). Rubin recently claimed the contrary: that the document was written shortly after the *hijra*, for there is evidence that Muḥammad had not yet given up hope of winning the support of the Jews. Below I shall examine to what extent we should accept the assertion which can commonly be found in Muslim sources, that Muḥammad indeed entertained some hopes regarding the Jews and was well-disposed to them at first. What is said in our document may shed some light on the question but on the other hand, we have very clear indications from the traditions on the life of the Prophet which state that the writing of the document was one of the Prophet's very first acts after his arrival in Medina.

The writing of the document is placed in the traditions before 'the brotherhood' arranged by Muḥammad between the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār*. The latter event occurred five months after his arrival in Medina, and some say eight. He was then occupied with the construction of the first *masjid*. Ibn Sa'd writes about a *ṣulḥ* arrived at between the Prophet and the Jews immediately after the assassination of Ka'b ibn al-Ashraf (which occurred in Rabī' I, of the third year), but this tradition is not reliable. Diyārbakrī explicitly states that the treaty (with the Jews) was made five months after the Prophet's arrival in Medina. As we shall see, this information specifying the time the document was written seems to be the most convincing and trustworthy and in view of what is said below about its contents, there seems to be no reason to question its validity.²⁴

6. The new unity

(25) In the opening phrases, the document defines itself as a pact between the *muhājirūn*, and the *anṣār*, and those who follow them, "adhere to, and strive with them" (par. 1). Henceforth they are a party or a community and no longer separate clans (par. 2). This is obviously the way to understand *min dūni 'l-nāsi*. *Dūna* is used frequently in the document (par. 2, 8, 13, 15,

²⁴ See the various opinions on the dating of the document: Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, 255f.; see also: Grimme, *Mohammed*, I, 76; Tor Andrae, *Mohammed*, 110f.; Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammads*, 211; Watt, *Cambr. Hist. of Isl.*, I, 41; Rubin, *SI*, 62 (1985), 18; Ibn Hishām, I, 341; Wāqidi, 176; Samhūdī, I, 190; Ibn Sa'd, II (1), 23; the traditions on the murder of Ka'b are not homogenous; see the article on him (W.M. Watt) in *El²*; Diyārbakrī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 398. There are many sources which refer to the document as "a treaty with the Jews"; this is discussed in detail in section 32 below.

17, 23, 26). Whenever it is used, one gets the distinct impression that this is idiomatic usage, employing the word only in its negative meaning. The proper way to translate *dūna* in this context would be to invert the two elements of the sentence: (the *mu'minūn* and the *muslimūn*) are no longer separate clans, they are an *umma*. It should be noted that *nās* here should not be understood as individuals but as the plural of *anas*, a synonym of *ḥayy*; it seems to be used as in Qur. xliii 32: *an yakūna 'l-nāsu ummatan waḥīdatan*, meaning that the clans became a united *umma*.

As to the word *umma*, the Qur'ān uses it extensively in the sense of 'group', 'community', and especially to express the concept of 'successive revelation'. Humanity has its *ummas* and God reveals himself in the course of the history of mankind to each successive generation's messengers: iv: 45, x: 48, xvi: 38, 86, 91; xxiii: 46; xxviii: 75; xxxv: 22; xl:5; xlv: 25. It then had its deeds prescribed by God, vi: 108. Every *umma* has its own time: ii: 128, 135; vii: 32; x:50, xiii: 29; xv: 5; xx: 35, 66; xxiii: 45. There has always been more than one *umma*, and a schism occurred in each: v:53; vii:36; x: 20; xi:120; xvi:95; xxi:92; xxiii:54; xlii: 4; xliii: 21; xlv: 27. God has a chosen group in every *umma*: xxvii 85. Abraham was a devout *umma* (!), being a *ḥanīf*: xvi 121. So his offspring the Arabs will be a good *muslim umma*: ii:122; 137; iii: 100, 106. Among the people of the book there has been a good *umma*, iii:109; v 70; vii 159, 180; and a bad *umma*, vii: 164. Evidently the belief in 'successive revelation' resulted in *umma* being used at times as an era or a period, xi: 11; xii: 45. However it seems that *umma* may also have had an earlier connotation, that of a group or even a social stratum: xxviii: 22 : (a group of individuals watering their sheep in the waters of Madyan); xvi: 94; xliii 32. Hence the meaning of *umma* is, as stated here, a community.

As is clear from the document itself, this new unity consists of the *mu'minūn* and the *muslimūn* of Quraysh and Yathrib, and "those who follow, adhere to, and strive with them". No neutral party is to be included, if this opening phrase is to be believed. The significance of the term *mu'minūn* at that time differs from its later connotation; it is not the same as the Hebrew '*ma'amīnīm*'. The root of the word is '*m.n.*' which means security. As it evolves from reading the document, what is being referred to is a security pact, in which the security of the individual and his family is no longer the responsibility of the clan or the tribe, but that of the inter-tribal alliance headed by Muḥammad. Hence the literal meaning of *mu'minūn* would then be "those who provide security", or actually "those who joined the security pact".²⁵

²⁵ On *dūna*, cf. Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v.; B. Qurayza said to Abū Lubāba: *naḥnu mawālīka dūna 'l-nāsi kullihim*, i.e. we are not clients of anyone but yourself; see Wāḡidī, II, 506. Also, when Muḥammad asked all those present to rise in honor of Sa'd b. Mu'adh, there is an explanation which specifies that he was not referring to the Qurashites, but only to the *anṣār*: *al-anṣara dūna qurayshin*, *ibid.*, 511f. The property of the B. Naḍir is divided '*ala 'l-muhājirīna dūna 'l-anṣārī*' – among the *muhājirūn*, not the *anṣār*; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1453, line 3. On the "successive revelation", see preferably Tor Andrae, *Die Person Muhammads*, 292f. Mawṣilī, MS BL Or 2981, fol. 90, explains, referring to the Qur'ān, 2:122, that *umma* is *jilun min al-nāsi*, a generation of people, and he further cites al-Anbārī, saying that *umma* also refers to "the adherents of the Prophet", and Ibn 'Abbās, who states that what the Qur'ān means is Muḥammad's *umma*, i.e. the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār*. See also the article *umma* (R. Paret) in *El²*; and Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, 240f.; *jāhadū* in the opening sentence is

7. Blood-money and the redemption of prisoners

(26) Each of the clans united by Muḥammad into a newly-formed security alliance, made itself publicly responsible for blood-money, while the entire community of *mu'mins* would deal with the redemption of prisoners. Contrary to what has been generally understood, these two matters were not of equal significance, for the conditions were actually contradictory. Whereas blood-money was to be paid separately by each clan, the ransoming of captives would be a common responsibility of the entire Muslim community.

Each clan mentioned in the pact was to be responsible for paying the blood-money firstly for its own people. This is how *al-awlā* is to be understood. Its meaning here is 'first' or 'with priority' and not 'the previous' (blood-money), as it was usually interpreted. This undoubtedly restricted the exclusivity of the clan in these matters, but an element of exclusivity was still retained. It should also be noted that this same word, *al-awlā*, is lacking when speaking of the *muhājirūn*. In this respect, Abū 'Ubayd's different version, which has *al-awlā* for the *muhājirūn* as well, is less reliable. In other words, the Prophet was prepared, when there was no alternative, to ensure the community's payment of blood-money or share in the payment, but the major responsibility would still be that of the clan. As to the *muhājirūn*, the Qurashite Meccans, they would never come forward with any claim for blood-money from the community, which meant that their situation in this respect was inferior to that of the *anṣār*.²⁶

(27) Contrary to the intimacy of the tribal framework and that of the clans, this pact acquired added responsibility by being made and recorded

understood by Watt, *ibid.*, 22: 'crusade'; such an exalted meaning is in line with subsequent developments; see also Serjeant, *IQ*, 8 (1964), 11. *Variae lectiones*: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, III, 224; ... *al-nabīyu al-ummī*; Abu 'Ubayd, *Amwāl*, 202, adds: ... *fā-halla ma'ahum*, "who have their quarters with them". Rubin, *SI*, 62 (1985), 14 prefers the reading *min al-mu'minīn* rather than *ma'a al-mu'minīn* (paragraph 22); but the reading *ma'a* is clearly the *lectio difficilior*, and thus the preferable one. Rubin's intention was to prove that the Jews were indeed considered part of the *mu'minūn*, whereas this is disproved by the document itself (see section 36 below); also, he does not refer to the meaning of mutual security which is embodied in the term *mu'minūn*, but translates it as merely 'believers'; see *ibid.*, 13; in this, he is one of many, as this is the way in which this term is understood by modern scholars of early Islam. See e.g. Denny, *JNES*, 36 (1977), 39ff.; see in Shaban, *Isl. Hist.*, 56f., the discussion on the question of whether *mu'minūn* could refer to the inner circle of the *umma*, whereas *muslimūn*: the entire community, as assumed by Gibb and Serjeant—see references, *ibid.*; but there is no real basis for this opinion. Serjeant, *BSOAS*, 41 (1978), 12f., expresses an opinion on this matter which is close to mine.

²⁶ *Al-awlā*: see *Lisān al-ʿarab*, XX, 293f.; cf. Reckendorf, *Synt. Verh.*, lxiv, no. 3. See traditions on an alleged *kitāb* written by the Prophet, dealing with the amounts of blood-money, such as 100 camels for killing a person: Mālik, *Muwattā*, 226 (no. 663). Serjeant, *BSOAS*, 41 (1978), 21, understood the opposite: that the *muhājirūn* will not be liable for blood-money at all, whereas the *anṣār* will abide by their previous rules. The *lex talionis* was always considered a sacred duty by the Bedouin, principally with reference to the nearest of kin, the *khamsa*, five ranks of nearest of kin of the victim. Blood-money was in the amount of 100 camels, as was the ransom of a prisoner; but some said that she-camels were required for blood-money and he-camels for ransoming; see e.g. Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ*, V, 174. The first to have introduced blood-money at such a price is said to have been 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's grandfather; see Mawṣilī, *Wasā'il*, MS Cambridge Or Qq 33, fol. 125b. See also Bräunlich, *Islamica*, 6 (1934), 80ff.; Jacob, *Beduiner*, 137, 145.

in public, lending it a kind of public character; which was stressed by the repetition of the formula: *bi'l-ma'rūfi wa'l-qisṭi bayna'l-mu'minīna* (par. 4, 6, 7). There was an attempt to compare this version with the biblical "mercy and truth" (Prov. 14:22) but here it simply meant "openly and officially". The public character and collaboration also gain greater force from the concluding passage (par. 7), the meaning of which was that despite what was said above, if the local clan, or even the *muhājirūn*, were in dire straits, they would not be abandoned and the community would come to their assistance. The significance of these paragraphs which appear at the head of the document, is that stricter attention would be paid to the taking of a life which calls for the payment of blood-money, if it did not happen during a battle, or if it happened during a battle which ended in defeat. On the other hand, the redemption of prisoners would, as a matter of course, oblige the community, as people are taken prisoners only in battle and this could only occur on the orders of the leader, that is, the Prophet. This was indeed the custom during the campaigns which took place later on, such as the attack against the Banū Hawāzin, commanded by Abū Bakr. A beautiful young woman from the Banū Fazāra was captured. She was not harmed in any way and was brought before Muḥammad, and he sent her to Mecca as ransom for some Muslim prisoners. The ancient ties within the clan, with its obligation towards the individual, are expressed in the term *rib'a*. This is its correct meaning (I translate "between themselves", that is, according to the connection existing there) and there is no foundation for the view that it had a locative sense, as dwellings; it is known that the *muhājirūn* had no separate quarter in Medina but were dispersed among the *anṣār*. What subsequently happened in Medina, the murderous acts executed by some members of the community, and moreover, the numerous battles instigated by the Muslim community, certainly rendered these sections of the document additional practical significance.²⁷

²⁷ The duty of the community to help and to participate was remembered later, while the 'constitution' was still hidden. It was known that the sheath of *dhū'l-faḡār* contained a *ṣaḥīfa* which stated that *al-'aqlu 'alā 'l-mu'minīna*. *Qisṭ* has the meaning of 'uncover' in Amharic as well; see Dillmann, *Lexicon*, 421. The girl from the B. Fazāra: Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, II, 949. Above, in note 21, is a listing of traditions which contain information regarding the blood-money regulation included in the hidden *ṣaḥīfa*; see preferably Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *kitāb al-diyāt*, *bāb al-'aqla*; the *ṣaḥīfa* contained the matter of the *ma'āqil*; see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1367; or of the *diyāt*: Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, II, 887. Serjeant, *Mél. T. Husain*, 49, 57, n. 10. The version in Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, III, 224: *'alā kulli baṭni 'uqūluhu*, "each clan is liable for its blood-money", which is in line with my interpretation. While I use the term 'clan', the actual division of tribal society was much more complex. Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, II, 157, lists, in order of size: *sha'b*, *qabila*, *'imāra*, *baṭn*, *fakhidh*, *faṣila*, *'ashīra*. The latter, he says, refers to the nearest of kin, i.e. the family. So also Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *Uyūn*, I, 23. *Mufrāḥ* (paragraph 7), which has the meaning of 'abandoned', is explained in Ibn Sa'd, I (2), 172: people without a *mawlā*, a protector. The correct version may possibly be *muḡraḥ*, as in Abū Da'ūd, *Marāsīl*, 29, who quotes al-Zuhrī, and explains, according to al-Ṣan'ānī, that the reference is to a person who has to pay blood-money out of his personal property. On the *muhājirūn* in Medina, cf. Wellhausen, *Sk. u. Vorarb.*, IV, 68.

8. The exclusivity of the document

(28) The *muslimūn* are strictly forbidden to conclude any covenant with the clients (*mawālī*) of other *mu'mins*; covenants are to be concluded only between Muslim clans (par. 8, 15, 17). Here again, we find the word *dūna* being used, and the meaning is, as I have mentioned above: "only another *mu'min*, and not his client".

A central condition in this sphere was that a *muslim* would not kill another *muslim* (in reprisal) for a *kāfir* (par. 10) nor help a *kāfir* against a *muslim* (par. 11). This condition was also preserved in the oral tradition and is scattered among the traditions on the contents of the hidden document kept in the sheath of *dhū'l-faqr*: *la yuqṭalu muslimun bi-kāfirin*.

It is clear that the purpose of these clauses was to prevent the renewal of old inter-tribal intrigues based on alliances with external elements, meaning primarily the Jews. The purpose then was to avoid any eventual damage to the pact by a possible union between the Jews, as clients of the different clans, with one or several Arab clans; some of them may have been reluctant from the outset, during negotiations over the wording of the document, to participate in actions against Jews who were formerly their allies.

Thus the *mu'minūn* were now organized in a new community, based on a new form of solidarity which was to replace the clan as far as political and military matters were concerned. These new bonds would be used against whoever plotted against them, against any iniquity or enemy, and against the corrupt, even if they were the offspring of confederates in the pact (par. 9). It was clear that precedence would be given to the ties within the *umma* over kinship or family ties; from now on, the individual would need the protection of the *umma*: no longer that of the clan (par. 13).²⁸

9. God's protection

(29) From now on, the *mu'mins* became one another's clients and the guarantors of the security of each one of them, in the face of the *kāfirūn*. This new union of mutual security was meant to be under God's protection, and there should be no discrimination before Him (par. 12; this is its true meaning). The somewhat vague formulation of this phrase led to misinterpretations both in the way it was preserved in *ḥadīth* sources and in modern translations. The phrase *yujīru 'alayhim* refers to Allah. Weil's translation: *Und erstreckt sich über den geringsten* has preserved the correct meaning although it is not grammatically correct, for it has *dhimma* as the subject. This applies to Caetani as well. The accepted translation, as in Watt: "The granting of 'neighborly protection' by the least of them (the *mu'mins*) is binding on them" is not correct, despite being inspired by the later well-known principle that every Muslim could grant protection to a *kāfir*. In Bukhārī we find: *dhimmatu'l-muslimīna waḥdatun*, which is obviously a distortion of the primary source, i.e. our document. Ibn al-Athīr adds *yas'ā*

²⁸ Wellhausen, *Sk. u. Vorarb.*, IV, 68, finds that *dūna* as used here is parallel to the Hebrew *al pānāw*, which is not well-founded, as explained here. The *ḥadīths*: Ibn Sa'd, I (2), 172; Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *bāb la yuqṭalu muslimun bi-kāfirin*, as also in Tirmidhī; Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, II, 887; Abū Da'ūd, *Sunan*, 304.

bihā adnāhum, as does Abū Da'ūd. The phrase also became: *yujīru 'alā l-muslimīna adnāhum wa-yaruddu 'alā l-muslimīna aqṣāhum*. In another version, in Abū Da'ūd, we find the same idea, that Muslims, great and humble, defend one another. Thus, the original meaning has been lost both by the Muslim commentators as well as by modern scholars.²⁹

(30) *Dhimmatu'llāhi* should therefore be understood, as it actually was, as a union of solidarity under Allah's protection. The fate of every man in the *umma* is precious to Allah, who sees to the welfare of each one just as every member of the *umma* should care for his fellow. The ancient obligation of the clan to avenge the blood of its members is passed on to the new community, on condition that the blood was spilled for the common aim, that is, in the struggle for Allah's cause. Hence it was clearly the obligation of every *mu'min* to act against whoever offends a member of the *umma* and kills him, to avenge his blood (par. 18). This regulation is echoed in a later tradition explaining this act as a statement of the solidarity of all Muslims against non-Muslims, and the mutual guarantee of blood and property: *yad al-muslimīna 'alā man siwāhum, tatakāfa'u dimā'uhum wa-amwāluhum*.

This obligation, guaranteed by God and the Prophet, as included in our document, can be seen as the major innovation when compared with similar pacts of a political nature common to tribal society in pre-Islamic times.

The logical conclusion called for by these obligations was that peace also depended on the consensus of the community and must be accepted by all participants. The possibility of a *mu'min* concluding a separate peace agreement was out of the question. The conditions of peace must express the equality and justice existing among the members of the *umma* (par. 15).

A *mu'min* who aids a rebel evil-doer, i.e. a *muḥḍith*, and offers him shelter, invokes God's wrath which will be carried out on the Day of Judgment (par.19). The purpose was probably to prevent protection from being offered to people whom the Prophet eventually intended to fight for being alleged intriguers and evil-doers who were plotting against him. Several years later, Muḥammad praised the killers of 29 Jewish delegates from Khaybar, telling them God had saved the *muslimūn* from the hands of evil-doers, *min al-qawmī'l-zālimīn*. In the *ḥadīth*, the statement is preserved as directed against the *muḥḍith* as well and not only against those who provided him with shelter.

Our document also contains regulations dealing directly with warfare. The defense of Yathrib is the common duty of all parties; the fighters are to share its defense equally and fulfill their duties as required of them, providing every *muslim* with the possibility of using the riding beasts as well as being equal partners in the war against *kāfirūn* (par.16, 34).³⁰

²⁹ See Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, bāb ḥaramu'l-madīnati*; Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi'*, X, 193; Abū Da'ūd, *Sunan*, IV, 304; cf. Weil, *Das Leben Muh.*, I, 251; Caetani, I, 398; Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, 222.

³⁰ The *ḥadīth*: Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, II, 895 (*bābu'l-muslimīn tatakāfa'u dimā'uhum wa-amwāluhum*); Abū Da'ūd, *Sunan*, IV, 304. In the expression *man i'tabaṭa mu'minan*, the root 'bṭ contains the meaning of violence, as in Geez; see Dillmann, *Lexicon*, 988: *Vi adigere ad peragendum aliquid*; so also in Aramaic, see e.g. Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. See also 'Azīzī, *Sirāḥ*, III, 378; some say: *mugṭabīṭan*, from *ghbṭ*, which he explains as having the meaning of 'joy', as a man rejoices when he has killed his enemy. We also find, instead of *i'tabaṭa*: *akhfara musliman*, "to betray a Muslim"; no indemnity (*ṣarf*) or atonement (*adl*) is acceptable in this case; see Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ, bāb ḥaramu'l-madīnati*; in Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi'*, X, 193: *aḥfara*, which is to be understood as 'killed', though this meaning does not

10. *The new justice and the ḥaram*

(31) In the document, a new judicial system was introduced by the twice-repeated statement that every dispute must be brought before God and the Prophet (par. 20, 31). This decision was no less meaningful to the new union than the obligation to stand before God was to the ancient Israelites (Exod. 22:11). It is possible that in the sentence *fa-inna maraddahu ilā 'llāhi wa-ilā muḥammadin* there is a typical Bedouin term, the *maradd*. Serjeant noted that among the southern tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, *maradd*, or *marji*^c, means a legal authority. If indeed this term was already rooted among the tribes in that early period, then perhaps Muḥammad used this term for a legal official, which was familiar to his allies in Yathrib, lending it a new meaning: from that point onward, one does not approach the legal authority of the tribe, i.e. the *maradd*, for Allah and Muhammad would now assume the role of *maradd* in his stead.

Closely connected with the new judicial system was also the decision that Yathrib is *ḥarām* (par. 28). The term used here is *jawf*, and there is another version, *jurf*, which was a specific place in Medina. It seems that the intention here was the center of Medina, which was a city made up of a number of villages. On this matter, there are varied and opposing opinions among the scholars, just as there are in the *ḥadīth* literature about the boundaries of the declared *ḥaram*. It was possibly the area between the two volcanic plateaus, the *labatayn* or *ḥarratayn*, 'Ā'ir and Thawr. The major issue was naturally the nature of the new regulations: the traditions speak of a ban on hunting, on the uprooting of trees, and the interdiction against bearing arms in the city. The intention here was evidently the creation of a holy place, without violence or the spilling of blood.

The term *ḥarām* corresponds to the Hebrew *ḥērem*, which is also equivalent to *qōdesh* as well as to the Latin *sacer*, terms bearing a certain degree of ambivalence: that is, the holy and the forbidden. In the minds of the participants to the pact, this was undoubtedly a sort of taboo, intended to make Medina a secure zone for both its inhabitants and its visitors. One can associate this decision with similar customs which are still in existence in the south of the Arabian Peninsula, according to Serjeant. The traditions of *ḥums* and *ilāf*, which expressed the desire for coexistence between merchants of Mecca and the nomadic tribes, had evidently been the first steps towards the formation of the *ḥarām* of Mecca, with which the family of the Prophet was closely involved. As the *ḥarām* of Mecca was a secure zone, a

appear in the dictionaries. For the innovative nature of the *umma*'s responsibility for the security of the *mu'min*, see also Obermann, *The Idea of History*, 271. The delegates from Khaybar: Wāqidi, 568; there is a strong connection between what is said in Qur'ān 2:117-118, 140, and in the story of Khaybar, in both of these places, the Jews are referred to as *zālimīn*, a term which corresponds to *muḥdith* in our document. In the Qur'ānic version: "no compensation shall be accepted from them"; *la yuqbalu ... 'adlun*, and in our document: *la yu'khdhu* (paragraph 19). See the *ḥadīth* version: Bukhārī, as above in this note; Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmi'*, 193; Abū Da'ūd, *Sunan*, IV, 304. The idea of taking turns in the use of riding beasts (paragraph 16), principally of camels, was indeed implemented at Badr: *wa-kānu ya'taqībūna al-ihālāthatu wa'l-arba'atu wa'l-ithnāni 'alā ba'ṭrin* ("they would take turns by three, or four, or two, on one camel"); see Samhūdī, II, 50.

condition essential for both commerce and overall urban development, it was probably this kind of improvement, including its taboo, that Muḥammad had in mind for Medina. "Every Prophet had a *ḥarām*, so mine is Medina", were the words attributed to the Prophet by tradition. Or: "just as Ibrāhīm made Mecca a *ḥaram*, I have likewise made Medina". Muḥammad asked God to bless Medina twice as much as Mecca, which explains why one of the names of Medina is *al-mubāraka*, i.e., the city that will be blessed.

It should be borne in mind that Kathīr b. ʿAbdallāh, to whom the tradition concerning the preservation of the pact is attributed (see above, sec. 22), was the man to whom Muḥammad entrusted the supervision of the *ḥarām* in Medina. The decision relating to the *ḥarām* is one of the particular points which oral tradition has preserved from the document kept in the sheath of *dhū 'l-faqār*.³¹

11. Restrictions relating to women

(32) Another clause whose aim was to improve security among the clans and do away with an eternal source of violent disputes, was the ban on giving protection to a woman from another clan, without her clan's permission (par. 30). The purpose of this decision may have been to do away with the remnants of the ancient tribal matriarchy which persisted in the form of a certain amount of sexual freedom for women, and the possibility, if they wished, to join another clan. The tendency now was to strengthen the patriarchal institutions and customs in smaller tribal units, an attitude which Muḥammad seems to have readily adopted or which may have been consistent with the views he already held during his Meccan period.

Spencer has earlier pointed to the connection between the exogamous marriages (as against the endogamous ones that were considered most desirable in tribal society) and the development of *ḥilf* relationships, that is, pacts between tribal units and mutual protection. In exogamous marriages it

³¹ Serjeant, *Mél. T. Husain*, 44. *Maradd* has a locative meaning: the place where one files a complaint. This semantic process is similar to calling the judge, in Jewish tradition, by the name of the institution, *bēi dīn* ("court of law"), rather than by his proper appellation, *dayyān*, or saying *yeshiva* to denote the head of the *yeshiva*. We find this also among the Jews of Medina, where the Arabic term *majlis*, which means a session (of the court), became the appellation of the local judges. Zabīr b. Bāṭā, one of the leaders of the B. Qurayza, who was about to be spared from being slain, kept inquiring about the fate of his friends, and asks about the *majlisān* (dual form), preferring to die when he heard that the two had been executed; see Wāqidi, 518. On the use of such appellations among Jews, see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 595 n. 17. With regard to the south of the Arabian Peninsula and the *ḥarām*: Serjeant, *ibid.*, 41-58. On the location of the *ḥarām*, see Samhūdī, I, 91, in his description of the events in Medina in the days of Yazīd (ca. 681): ...*samʿū fī jawfi 'l-madinati 'l-takbīra*, "in the jawf of Medina they heard the shouting of *allāhu akbar*". Mālik, *Muwatṭā*, 317 (no. 891), cites a *ḥadīth* ascribed to the Prophet, which states that Medina has a purifying influence. See ʿAzīzī, *Sirāj*, II, 57, on the *ḥarām* having been located between the *labatayn*, and the explanation of the meaning of this fact. Cf. Wellhausen, *Sk. u. Vorarb.*, IV, 72, where he explains that the reference is to the valley of Yathrib. Serjeant, *Mél. T. Husain*, 50, prefers *batn al-wādī*, as in Ibn al-Athīr. See Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *bāb ḥaramu 'l-madinati*; Ibn al-Athīr, *Jāmiʿ*, X, 190, 193, 194; on the *ḥums*, etc., see Kister, *JESHO*, 8 (1965), 118f.; see also Simon, *Acta Or.* (Hung.), 23:205, 1970. For the *ḥadīths* ascribed to the Prophet, see Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid.*; Samhūdī, I, 64-67.

was customary for the children to take their mother's lineage—clearly a remnant of the matriarchal system. Accordingly, one can see in the new regulation a reduction in the development of inter-tribal relationships and pressure to adhere to the inner framework.

As mentioned above, however, the Prophet's major concern was security and keeping the peace between the clans joining the *umma*. This becomes increasingly obvious in the following decision (par. 31), as it was also understood by the traditionists, who connected the two clauses with one another, stating that any *ḥadath* (offense) or *ishtijār* (adultery) be brought before God and Muḥammad. Echoes of this decision found their way into *ḥadīth* literature, as in other instances, the traditions being generally ascribed to ʿĀ'isha, the Prophet's wife. Hence it was said, for instance, that if a man comes to a woman, he was obliged to pay the bridal price, and that if there was *ishtijār*, then *fa'l-sulṭānu waliyu man lā waliya lahu*, meaning evidently that the protector would be the one who had no protector above him, i.e. God. This is similar to what is said in our document, that is, if a woman's honor was violated, the matter had to be brought before God and Muḥammad. The root *shjr*, in the sixth form, is used mainly as meaning a quarrel or controversy. The eighth form is very rare: we find it in poetry: *ishtajara 'l-qanā*, referring to spears, and we do not know what happened to the Bedouin spears when they clashed; but we also find in Naṣr b. Muzāḥim al-Minqarī: "we shall have no sleep until we run through the horses with our spears": *fa-lā nawma ḥatā tushjar al-khaylu bi'l-qanā* (from Muʿāwiya's funeral oration on ʿUthmān).

The tradition going back to ʿĀ'isha, who told it in the name of the Prophet, says that if a woman is not married through a *walī*, the marriage is void. Some versions have *nakaḥat*, which is intransitive, meaning that a woman was forbidden to give herself in marriage. At any rate, the main purpose of these decisions was to do away with a source of quarrels and dissension between the clans.³²

³² See Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 40 (1886), 149; Spencer, *SW Journal of Anthropology*, 8 (1952), 488f.; Heffening, *Fremdenrecht*, 90. Heffening attempted to explain (following a letter which he received from Joseph Horowitz) that the objective of this regulation was merely to avoid gossip and rumors; but this was not the main purpose. A case in point regarding marriage outside the paternal clan without its permission appears in Wāqidi, 376f.; this is the story of ʿUrwā and Salmā. ʿUrwā had captured Salmā from her tribe. Their sons were subsequently exposed to gossip. She made him return her to her tribe and have her duly married. The way in which this occurred was very characteristic: ʿUrwā drank wine with the B. Naḍir until he was drunk, and being very poor, he had no choice but to leave Salmā among these Jews as a pledge for the price of the wine; in this way, she returned to her clan. The *ḥadīth* on *ishtijār*: Ibn Māja, *Sunan*, I, 605ff.; Abū Daʿūd, *Sunan*, II, 65, 190; Tirmidhi, *Jāmiʿ*, *bāb lā nikāḥa illā bi-walī*; Baghawī (the version of al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrizī), II, 169 (no. 3131). In this matter, see also: ʿAjlūnī, *Kashf*, II, 369; Tabarānī, *Muʿjam*, II, 93. ʿĀ'isha, the Prophet's wife, assumed that the *walī* had somewhat of a master's status, and that its role was similar to that of "the one who frees", implying a relationship similar to that between a master and a freedman. In ca. 780 (toward the end of the reign of al-Mahdī), Yahyā b. Maʿīn argued that the *ḥadīth* on the regulation that marriage should only take place through a *walī* is not a trustworthy one; this might have been an expression of the rationalistic trend; Yahyā b. Maʿīn was later among the supporters of the creed which had to do with the 'created' Qurʾān; see Ṭabarī, *Taʾrikh*, III, 1116. See also the article by Abbott, *AJSL*, 58 (1941), 256ff.; on the use of *man* as a relative pronoun, see Reckendorf, *Synt. Verh.*, II, no. 196, and especially p. 607. *Ishajara*, see e.g. Wellhausen, *Hudhailiten*, 125 (no. 278), line 58. See Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, 80. On the root *shjr* in Geez, see Dillmann, *Lexicon*, 398; the marriage is

12. *A treaty with the Jews?*

(33) The opening sentence in Ibn Ishāq describes the pact as an agreement between the Prophet and the Jews, defining the latter's rights and duties. This idea was also repeated elsewhere, starting with Wāqidī. In his introduction to the affair of the Banu Qaynuqā', Wāqidī quotes a tradition going back to Ibn Ka'b al-Qurazī. According to this tradition: when the Prophet came to Medina, all the Jews came to meet him and he wrote a document dealing with his relations with them in which he endorsed the alliances between the Jews and each tribe (*qawm*), made a treaty with them, and established their conditions. Among other things, one of the conditions was that they should not support his enemies. Wāqidī returns to the subject in his description of the battle of the *khandaq*. When the Prophet arrived in Medina, he reached an agreement with Qurayza and Naḍīr, and the other Jews in Medina, to the effect that some of them would help him if he was attacked, while continuing to maintain their former ties (*ma'āqil*) with Aws and Khazraj.

Obviously the attitude of the Muslim sources is that there was indeed a treaty between the Jews and the Prophet, that the Jews took on themselves certain obligations which they did not discharge, and that if their fate turned out to be a bitter one later on, they had only themselves to blame.

There are many and varied versions with regard to this alleged treaty with the Jews, such as that there was between the Prophet and the Banū Qurayza a non-binding agreement of the order of the *walṭh* until they came to terms with his enemies; or that there was a *hudna* (truce) agreement between them. According to this agreement, the Jews were obliged to assist the Muslims and refrain from helping the heathens. Ibn Kathīr was evidently the only one who displayed some sensible caution and read the treaty carefully before writing his introductory phrase, saying: "He wrote a *kitāb* between the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār*, that they pay their blood-money"; and does not mention the Jews as being a party to the agreement.³³

void: Ibn Māja, Abū Da'ūd, as above in this note. 'Azīzī, *Sirāj*, II, 113; Malaṭī, 162ff., also writes about a sect called *al-khaṭṭābiyya*, after 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, which permitted marriage without a *walī* or bridal money. For details on marriage customs in pre-Islamic times, see Bukhārī, *bāb lā nikāḥa illā bi-walī*. Cf. the discussion on matters of marriage and family in that period, in Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, Exc. J., 373-388.

³³ Ibn Sa'd, II (1), 55 (*walṭh*); Yawāqīt, MS BL 3771, fol. 62a; Suyūfī, *Khaṣā'is*, II, 5 (quoting Ibn Sa'd); Ṣan'ānī, *Muṣannaf*, V, 216 (no. 9422; I thank Prof. Kister for this reference); Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, III, 224; Halabī, *Insān al-'Uyūn*, 245f; Ṭabarī, *Flām*, 45 (*hudna*); Samhūdī, I, 197; Mawṣilī, *Wasā'il*, MS Cambridge Or Qq 33, fol. 160b. Zurqānī, *Sharḥ*, I, 456; Ibn Ishāq (*apud* Ibn Hishām), 454, in the opening sentence, finds that the center of gravity of the document is in matters of religion and property (*dīn, amwāl*). Wensinck, *Muh. en de Joden*, 86ff., referring to Wāqidī, Ṭabarī and Balādhurī, who omit the sentence *wa-aqarrahum 'alā dīnīhim wa-amwālīhim* (he confirmed the [conditions of the Jews'] religion and property), assumed that there was a contradiction between the document and the subsequent position adopted by the Prophet, to the effect that it is impossible to accept more than one religion in the Arabian Peninsula. See also Maqrīzī, *Imtā'*, I, 104: through this treaty, the Prophet maintained the validity of the Jews' treaties with all of the tribes. Maqdīsī, *Bad'*, IV, 179. According to Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 1359, a treaty was concluded between the Jews and

(34) Some modern scholars have accepted the view expressed in the Muslim sources that the pact was a treaty between the Jews and the Prophet. In his general survey of the history of the Jews, Baron sees in the document, "a fairly authentic record of the mutually agreed constitution". In his view, this is connected with the fact that Muḥammad was "first admitted hospitably, and even supported as an ally in his war against the opposing Meccan faction". Wismar also expressed little doubt that Muḥammad had made an agreement with the Jews in which he promised them complete religious freedom. He even called his book: *A Study in Tolerance, as Practiced by Muhammad and His Immediate Successors*. Al-theim and Stiehl explain that the Jewish tribes had been strongly linked to the Persians in Medina, and when Persian influence waned, the situation of the Jews in Medina also suffered, whereas the Arabs, that is the Aws and the Khazraj, had had their day. After the Arabs continued to fight one another (the battle of Bu'āth), the Jews once again rose to their former position of strength. Indeed, this may have been the reason why Muḥammad accepted them "into the brotherhood (*Bruderbund*) within which he succeeded in uniting the entire city even before the battle of Badr". A similar view was also held by Watt, who pointed to the *pax islamica* expressed by the document, that is, the peace enjoyed by the participants with the establishment of the *umma*. The advantages of the new system were to be shared in part, at least, by the traditional allies of the *anṣār*, i.e. the Jews, and the nomad tribes of Medina and its vicinity. Whereas Obermann considered the treaty to be the expression of "a purely political confederacy comprising all the people of Medina, pagan and Jew, no less than his converted followers". Crone and Cook, who developed a theory which sees Islam as primarily the result of Jewish influence, also accept the opinion that this document is ancient and authentic and see the Jews as full members of the *umma*, equal to the Muslims. Rubin ventures even further. After he decided that the term *mu'minūn* has an explicitly religious connotation, while ignoring the implied element of security, he tries to prove that the Jews were also recognized as an *umma* of *mu'mins*. In order to support his opinion that the Jews were also recognized as a separate *umma*, who would enjoy full rights and security, Rubin quotes verses from the Qur'ān which appeal to the Jews in the name of the uniqueness of God, promising protection and security to whoever believes (in God) and does not commit evil deeds. However, these passages from the Qur'ān should be interpreted much more simply: these are merely the oft-repeated appeals to the Jews and the Christians (appeals frequently echoed in *ḥadīth* literature) to observe the monotheistic significance of the new religion, and to accept it in the name of the uniqueness and belief in Him (as well as in Muḥammad, his Prophet); if they do so, they will enjoy the benefits of security, and if not—they will be considered evil-doers (*ẓālimūn*) and will eventually be punished, as indeed was the case. This is what is said in the Qur'ān as well as in our document, as I shall show below. Rubin also grants credibility to the traditions according to which the Jews not only participated in the expenses involved in the wars of the Muslim *umma*, they also participated in the battles and received

the Prophet immediately upon the latter's arrival in Medina. Abū Da'ūd, *Sunan*, III, 115, states that the *ṣaḥīfa* was written between the Jews and all (*ʿamma*) the Muslims.

an equal share of the booty. However, it is clear that these somewhat later statements are merely part of the great alibi, according to which the Jews were a party to a treaty with Muḥammad and when they violated the terms of the treaty, they received what was coming to them. Rubin's opinion also completely contradicts what was said at the 'Aqaba meeting and the other explicit statements on the breaking of pacts with the Jews which I quote below. It was Serjeant, who while formulating a strange theory concerning the elaboration of the version of the document (above, sec. 23), recognized the fact that it contained no evidence of a treaty with the Jews; at any rate, not what he calls 'Document A'. In this matter, Serjeant followed in the footsteps of Wellhausen, whose opinion I shall quote in the following section.³⁴

13. *No reference to the Jewish tribes*

(35) Closely connected with the discussion on the alleged treaty with the Jews is also the question why there is no mention of the three main Jewish tribes of Medina: the Qaynuqā', Naḍīr, and Qurayza, which are frequently mentioned in the traditions on the life of the Prophet. There have been a number of conjectures concerning this puzzling question. Hirschberg, for instance, believed that some of the Jewish tribes mentioned in the document belonged to the Banu Qaynuqā'. Watt discussed this question extensively and arrived at the conclusion that as the B. Naḍīr and the B. Qurayza lived among the clans of Aws and Khazraj, they were considered integral elements of these clans and therefore are not mentioned separately in the document. This explanation is also supported by the mention in Ibn Hishām, K. al-Aghānī, and other sources, of many Jewish clans apart from the more well-known ones. Hence it seems that only the less important Jewish clans, which were clients of the Arab clans, are mentioned in the document.

Watt raised another possibility, which is that a later edition of the document censured any mention of those Jewish tribes which had been expelled or destroyed. In order to accept this idea, however, one has to take for granted that the document was indeed a treaty between Muḥammad and the Jews. If this is so, it would follow that the text preserved in Ibn Hishām is one of two versions of the treaty and that the earlier of the two, in which the three main Jewish tribes were mentioned, has not been preserved. Thus we return to the "method of the sources".

An important point noted by Wellhausen is that the document makes no mention whatsoever of the Khazraj, one of the two Arab tribes of Medina, although it does mention five clans known definitely as belonging to the Khazraj. This same situation may also be true with regard to the main Jewish tribes, that is, instead of naming the large tribes, the document mentions the clans belonging to them. Moreover, Wellhausen finds another explanation for the absence of any mention of the Jewish tribes of Medina—and

³⁴ Wismar, 26f.; Baron, *SRHJ*, III, 27; Altheim and Stiehl, *Finanzgeschichte*, 160; Obermann, *Idea of History*, 270; Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, 144; Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 7f.; Serjeant, *BSOAS*, 41 (1978), 15; Rubin, *SI*, 62 (1985), 11-18.

that is simply that the Jews were not partners to the covenant at all. That is why, he said, they are only present in the document as nameless clients of the Arab clans.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the names of certain clans whose Jewish identity was undisputed are mentioned in the document. It speaks of Jafna, for instance, who were a *baṭn* of Thaʿlaba, as well as of Banū Shuṭayba (par. 23) and stresses (in a rather vague manner) that the patrons of the Jewish clans were the address to whom the *umma* would turn because they represented their Jews. Hence the oft-repeated expression *ka-anfusihim*, “like they themselves”. Jafna seems to have been a Jewish clan who were clients of Thaʿlaba. According to some sources they had been ‘kings’ in Palestine and there were some who said that they belonged to the Banū Ghassān. About the Thaʿlaba it was also said that there were converts to Judaism among them. The entire section of the document which speaks of these Jewish clans, refers to their status after the document will be accepted, together with all its regulations. Apparently it is to them that the clause below (par. 24) refers, which states that the Jews cannot leave (the city) without Muḥammad’s permission. To sum up, both in this paragraph as well as in other paragraphs in which the Jews are mentioned (par. 4, 22, 23, 26), the fact that the Jews were considered clients (*hulafāʾ*, *mawālī*) of the Arab clans was stressed. This was the background and source of the general attitude towards them, which led to the fact that Muḥammad made a pact with the Arab clans and not with the Jews. The Arab clans then were to represent their Jews as well. This leaves us with the question as to why so many Arab sources described the document as if it were a treaty with the Jews? This we shall discover after a more careful study of the contents of the ‘Jewish’ paragraphs.³⁵

14. *The obligations of the Jews*

(36) There is one sentence in the ‘constitution’ consisting of merely two words that is enormously significant if we are to understand Muḥammad’s policy towards the Jews of Medina: *al-jāru kaʾl-naḥsi* (par. 29). The meaning of the phrase is that the patron is responsible for the behavior of his client. The status of the client in such circumstances resembles that of a class

³⁵ The overtures to the *ahl al-kitāb* are principally to be found in Qurʾān iii (*āl-ʿimrān*); Hirschberg, *Isrāʾīl baʿarāv*, 139; Wellhausen, *Sk. u. Vorarb.*, IV, 68, 83; Watt, *Muh. at Med.*, 158-162, 226f.; on *baṭn*, see n. 9 above; see also Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 40 (1886), 175; Ashkenazi, *Anthropos*, 41-44:657, 1946/9; Spencer, *SW Journal of Anthropology*, 8:495, 1952. Hamidullah, *Le prophète*, I, 136, translates *biṭāna* (paragraph 23, at the end) as *personnes introduites*; but this is no different from *baṭn*, clan. I have already cited details on B. Jafna, Thaʿlaba and other Jewish clans (section 8 above). Samhūdī, in the course of discussing the estate called Dilāl, said to have belonged to Mukhayrīq, the famous Jewish convert to Islam, states that it belonged to B. Thaʿlaba, who were Jews, *min yahūda*. On the B. Shuṭayba, he writes that they were people from Palestine, one of the clans which lived in Rāṭij, a place known to have been the abode of Jews; moreover, he mentions that the B. Zaʿūra, known to us from other sources as well and reputed to have been a Jewish clan from Medina, also lived there. For details, see Samhūdī, I, 115, 126, 152; II, 62, 154. Another tradition quoted by him, II, 328, implies that the B. Qurayza owned property in a place called Shuṭayba. See also Mawṣilī, *MS Cambridge Or Qq* 33, fol. 79, where ʿAmr, of the B. Jafna, is said to have been *maliku l-shām*, king of Palestine (perhaps meaning Syria as well).

known to us from ancient times, that of the freedmen. In early Muslim tradition we also find the status of *walī*, applied in particular to the patron who has freed his slave: *al-wilā' li-man a'taqa*, as in the *ḥadīth* ascribed to Muḥammad and brought in the name of ʿĀ'isha. This new regulation undoubtedly indicated an obvious deterioration in the status of the Jews. In practical terms, this meant that the Jews were no longer permitted to be involved in inter-tribal policies, such as concluding new treaties, or participating in conflicts on behalf of one side or another. We understand this correctly if we grasp that as in the other clauses of the document, the new situation was a negation of what had existed until then; that is, that previously the Jews had the right to handle their own affairs (including warfare), but on the other hand, they were responsible for any damage inflicted or debts incurred by them.

In addition to this clause, that is the restriction on the client's being able to make his own decisions, evidently aimed at the Jews in their role of *mawālī*, a large part of the document, roughly a third, consists of frank and explicit statements about the Jews. At first the Jews are mentioned in the clauses which proclaim "God's protection", *dhimmatu'llāhi*, and the *umma*. Here we read (par.14) a promise of peace and concern for the welfare of those Jews who will "follow us" (*man tabiʿanā*). We have also seen that the introductory passages of the document are addressed to "those who follow, adhere to, and strive with" the Muslims. There is no reason why we should understand this as meaning anything other than what it says. That is, that the Jews who adhere to Islam would enjoy the Prophet's "help and favor". By no means can these words be considered a promise of peace and security to Jews who wish to keep their faith. Nowhere in the document is there a promise or guarantee in favor of the Jews, nor can it be alleged that only at a further stage was there a decline in Muḥammad's attitude towards the Jews.

It states there that the Jews belong to the *umma* of the *mu'minūn* (par. 22). Although it speaks there of 'the Jews of B. ʿAwf', it obviously had a wider application; the B. ʿAwf may have haggled over the subject during the negotiations which preceded the document, and this clause was used to finally settle the matter. The Jews certainly belong to the *umma* of the *mu'minūn*, for from now on, they are absolutely subordinate to their patrons, the Arab tribes. Consequently they have to finance the war their patrons are about to wage (par. 21, 27).

The real and practical result of the new legal status of the Jewish clients is expressed in the statement that the Muslims of Medina would see to it that the debts of their Jewish clients were indeed paid. In the phrase: *walī'l-muslimīna daynuhum mawālīhim wa-anfusihim*, one has to read *d.y.n.*, not as religion, but as *dayn*, 'account'. The Jews were still responsible for their accounts, that is, their payments, whereas the Muslims are also responsible for their own debts and for those of their Jewish clients (par. 23). If *d.y.n.* was intended to mean religion, it would be a very awkward sentence, erring both grammatically and logically. It is not a proclamation of religious tolerance; on the contrary, it proclaims the Muslims' responsibility for what is due to the *umma* from their clients as well as what is due from themselves. In other words, this is a repetition of the principle mentioned above: "the client is like the patron himself".

There was also a restriction to this responsibility for it was limited to financial matters of debts and payments. In other matters, punishment would be inflicted on the evil-doer himself and not on the patron. In other words, the *anṣār* would have to pay if their Jewish clients did not, but they would not have to die for them. It is repeatedly stated that the responsibility exists for legitimate debts, not for evil deeds: *al-birru dūna'l-ithmi* (par.23, 26, 29).

What was considered legitimate could be easily ascertained. The regulations were closely connected with the obligations imposed on the Jews to share in the expenses involved in the impending war (par. 21). Every clan would then be responsible for the financial obligations of its Jews but not for any lawless arbitrary act of aggression on the part of the Jews towards the Muslims. In such an instance, only the Jews and their families would be punished, and this indeed was exactly what happened later on.³⁶

15. *The severance of relations with the Jews*

(37) Hamidullah was also aware of the fact that the document contained regulations aimed at a deterioration of the status of the Jews. To a large extent, they were deprived of their political and economic independence. In this document, the Prophet refers to them only in matters related to agreements with the Arab clans which had joined the *umma*. Hence he arrives at the conclusion that such a new attitude would only be tenable after Muḥammad had displayed a number of serious achievements on the battlefield, such as at Badr. This was not necessarily so. On the contrary, it is more likely, as stated above, that the document was actually a preparation for war rather than an outcome of war, for only in this manner are the various clauses logical. Through his alliance with the Arab tribes of Medina, he gathered sufficient strength to gradually carry out an anti-Jewish policy, despite the reservations and reluctance of the *anṣār*, their allies in Medina, who still stood by the obligations of their agreements with the Jews.

This problem was already understood at a much earlier phase by the participants in the second 'Aqaba meeting. It was Abū'l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān who expressed it when he put the question to the Prophet about

³⁶ The *ḥadīth*: Tabarānī, *Muʿjam*, II, 93. In this respect, according to Jewish law, the status of a freedman was that of a more independent person; upon gaining his freedom, he became responsible for the payment of his debts; see Mishnā, *Bāvā qammā* viii, 4: "if the bondman was freed, (he is) liable to make restitution" (translated by H. Danby, *The Mishnā*, Oxford 1933, p. 343). In the first version of this discussion (*IOS*, 4 [1974], 63), I argued that *dyn* in the document (paragraph 23) should be read as *dayn*, debt, and not as *dīn*, religion: *lil-yahūda daynuhum*. As a matter of fact, in both Arabic and medieval Hebrew, the *lam* designates credit, and 'alā debit—principally as these prepositions are used in merchants' account books. However, this does not exclude the possibility that the Prophet's intention had been to say that everyone owes his own debt. The word *dyn* may have been used here in its ancient meaning, that of accounting; see Sijistānī, *Gharīb*, MS India Office 3794, fol. 61a; *wa'l-dīn* (thus vocalized there) *al-ḥisāb*. See a document from the Judean Desert, of the beginning of the second century AD, in Yardeni, *Teʿūdōt*, 16, line 22, where the word *dīn* is used in relation to a debt; I assume it means there: debt, or accounting (not *ha-zē*—'this', as translated *ibid.*, 17; the greater part of the line there is not preserved; had he ment 'this', he would have used: *denā*, see the Index *ibid.*, 108). On the client being considered as totally belonging to the tribe which grants him protection, see 'Ajlūnī, *Kashf*, II, 291.

what would happen after the Arabs of Medina severed their ties with the Jews. At the same meeting, Abū'l-Haytham spoke of the *ḥibāl* which "link us with certain people", meaning the alliances between the Arab clans and the Jews. The Prophet merely smiled and made a disarming comment, saying he would respect and observe their alliances.

Explicit statements on what had been going on during the formulation of the 'constitution' are also attributed to ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. At the height of his war against Muʿāwīya, he reminded his men of the matter of the *anṣār* and the loyalty they showed the Prophet, despite the difficulties and attacks directed against them by all the Arab tribes; the *anṣār* did not hesitate, says ʿAlī, to completely sever their treaties with other tribes, not even the *ḥilf* (an agreement of mutual protection) between them and the Jews. How things actually developed we learn, among other things, from the traditions on the expulsion of the B. Qaynuqāʿ. Muḥammad, without invoking any agreement, demanded in the most direct manner that they accept Islam, and when they did not agree, took action against them. One of the sponsors of the agreement with the B. Qaynuqāʿ, ʿUbāda b. al-Šāmit, of the clan of B. ʿAwf, then publicly declared that he accepts God and his Prophet as his allies and completely renounces (*abraʿu*) the *ḥilf* with the B. Qaynuqāʿ. To which he adds, addressing the Prophet's two-faced rival ʿAbdallāh b. Ubayy: *taghayyarat al-qulūbu wa-maḥāʾl-islāmuʾl-ʿuhūda* (there was a change of heart, for Islam has cancelled the treaties). Later on, during the affair of the B. Qurayza, it was said that when Usayd b. Huḍayr was reminded by the B. Qurayza of the fact that they were the *allies* of his tribe, he answered: "There is no *ʿahd ill* (binding treaty) between us".

It is therefore clear that what happened to the Jews subsequently, after Badr, is not the "amazing reversal of this document", as Wellhausen puts it. On the contrary, it was the consummation of the document's contents. The events that followed, as the ancient Arab sources recall in detail, were the fulfillment of the planning formulated by the Prophet in the document. The subsequent events also shed light on some of the more obscure passages in the document. Serjeant was of a similar mind, saying: "the whole episode of the expulsion of the Jews of Medina (it would be more precise if he had added: 'and the annihilation of some of them') is an example of how Muḥammad applied the sanctions of tribal law". It would have been even more exact to say that the inter-tribal law innovated by Muḥammad had an a priori view of the expulsion, the dispossession, and even the annihilation of the Jews of Medina, at the very moment it was being written.

Clearly, the later Arab sources undoubtedly developed a tradition regarding an alleged agreement between Muḥammad and the Jews, a tradition which served as an alibi. Some modern scholars considered this document, or a similar one, as having been lost. In fact, not only was the 'constitution' no covenant with the Jews; it represented a clear-cut statement of intent to cut off all the ties between the Arab clans of Medina and their Jewish neighbors and abolish any covenant which existed between them.³⁷

³⁷ The ʿAqaba meeting: Ibn Hishām, 296; the full name of Abū'l-Haytham b. al-Tayyihān was Mālik b. al-Tayyihān b. Mālik b. ʿUbayd; see Mawṣilī, *Wasāʾil*, MS Cambridge Or Qq 33, fol. 51f.; and see the Index in Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, under Mālik b. al-Tayyihān. According to Ibn Saʿd, III (2), 21, his name was Mālik b. Balī, and he belonged to the B. Aws; while Ibn Saʿd also lists other opinions, he prefers the first one—see *ibid.*, 138; see

APPENDIX:

(38) From the *Sīrat al-nabī* by Ibn Ishāq as compiled by Ibn Hishām (with his additions), ed. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen 1860, 341-343.³⁸

The book written by the Messenger of God with the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār* and the agreement with the Jews. Ibn Ishāq says: then the Messenger of God wrote a book between the *muhājirūn* and the *anṣār* in which he made an agreement and a contract with the Jews confirming their rights regarding religion and their property and determining their obligations and privileges.

1. This is a book written by the prophet Muḥammad between the *mu'minūn* and the *muslimūn* of Quraysh and Yathrib and those who follow, adhere to, and strive with them.

2. They are (from now on) no longer (separate) clans but are an *umma*.

3. The *muhājirūn* from Quraysh will be responsible for the payment of blood-money between themselves.

4. The responsibility for the payment of redemption for their own prisoners will be shared by them and all the *mu'minūn* officially and openly.

5. The Banū 'Awf will primarily be responsible for the payment of blood-money between themselves.

6. The responsibility for the redemption of prisoners will be shared by every clan and the rest of the *mu'minūn*, officially and openly. (Here the document continues with a version similar to this, regarding the B. 'Amr b. 'Awf, al-Ḥārith B. Sa'āda, B. Jusham, B. 'Amr b. 'Awf, B. Nabīṭ, B. Aws.)

هذا كتاب من محمد النبي بين المؤمنين والمسلمين من قريش ويثرب ومن تبعهم فلحق بهم وجاهد معهم

انهم امة واحدة من دون الناس

المهاجرون من قريش على ربعتهم يتعاقلون بينهم

وهم يقدون عانيهم بالمعروف والقسط بين المؤمنين

وبنو عوف على ربعتهم يتعاقلون معاقلمهم الاولى

وكل طائفة تقدي عانيها بالمعروف والقسط بين المؤمنين وبنو الحارث على ربعتهم يتعاقلون معاقلمهم الاولى وكل طائفة تقدي عانيها بالمعروف والقسط بين المؤمنين وبنو ساعدة على ربعتهم يتعاقلون معاقلمهم الاولى وكل طائفة تقدي عانيها بالمعروف والقسط بين المؤمنين وبنو النجار على ربعتهم يتعاقلون معاقلمهم الاولى وكل طائفة تقدي عانيها بالمعروف والقسط بين المؤمنين وبنو عمرو بن عوف على ربعتهم يتعاقلون معاقلمهم الاولى وكل طائفة تقدي عانيها بالمعروف والقسط بين المؤمنين وبنو النبيت على ربعتهم يتعاقلون معاقلمهم الاولى

comments by Samhūdī, I, 163, 166. The statements of 'Alī: Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ naḥj al-balāgha* (Cairo ed.), II, 89, who quotes the author of *kitāb al-ghārāt*, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Sa'īd b. Hilāl al-Thaqafī, a Shiite, of the second half of the ninth century; cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 321. So also Hāshimī, *Ta'rikh al-anbār*, 41, who quotes al-Thaqafī without mentioning that he himself copied it from Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd; see the same statements in al-Ṭūsī, *Amālī*, I, 177; the matter of the B. Qaynuqā' and 'Ubāda b. al-Sāmit: Ibn Hishām, 545f.; Wāqidī, 179; Suyūṭī, *Lubāb al-nuqūl*, 90; see quotations from more traditionists in al-Jilānī, II, 30; see also al-Baghawī (the version of al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrizī), II, 417 (no. 4050); B. Qurayṣa: Wāqidī, 499. See Wellhausen, *Sk. u. Vorarb.*, IV, 81; Serjeant, *Mél. T. Husain*, 52.

³⁸ Additional expressions, such as blessings for the Prophet and others, added by the early copyists, are not included, nor are Ibn Hishām's explanations. A part of paragraph 24, and all of paragraph 34, are obscure, and their translation is uncertain.

وكل طائفة تقدي عانيها بالمعروف والقسط بين
المؤمنين وبنو الأوس على ربعتهم يتعاقلون معاقلهم
الأولى وكل طائفة تقدي عانيها بالمعروف والقسط
بين المؤمنين

وان المؤمنين لا يتركون مفرحا بينهم ان يعطوه
بالمعروف في فداء او عقل

وان لا يحالف مؤمن مولي مؤمن دونه

وان المؤمنين المتقين على من بغى منهم او ابتغى
دسيعة ظلم او اثم او عدوان او فساد بين المؤمنين
وان ايديهم عليه جميعا ولو كان ولد احدهم

ولا يقتل مؤمن مؤمنا في كافر

ولا ينصر كافرا على مؤمن

وان ذمة الله واحدة يجير عليهم اناهم

وان المؤمنين بعضهم موالى بعض دون الناس

وانه من تبعنا من يهود فان له النصر والاسوة غير
مظلومين ولا متناصر عليهم

وان سلم المؤمنين واحدة لا يسالم مؤمن دون مؤمن
في قتال في سبيل الله الا على سواء وعذل بينهم

وان كل غازية غزت معنا يعقب بعضها بعضا وان
المؤمنين يبيء بعضهم عن بعض بما نال دماءهم في
سبيل الله وان المؤمنين المتقين على احسن هدى
واقومه

وانه لا يجبر مشرك مالا لقريش ولا نفسا ولا يحول
دونه على مؤمن

7. However, the *mu'minūn* will not abandon any of them but will provide them officially with what is needed for ransom or the payment of blood-money.

8. The *mu'minūn* will only make a pact with another *mu'min* and not with his client.

9. The God-fearing *mu'minūn* will rise as one man against whoever secretly contrives plots against them and commits wrongs and evil deeds or deeds of enmity or corruption against one of the *mu'minūn*; even if he was the son of one of them.

10. A *mu'min* shall not kill another *mu'min* over (the killing) of a *kāfir*.

11. A *mu'min* shall not take sides with a *kāfir* against another *mu'min*.

12. God grants equal protection to all, even to the humblest among them (the *mu'minūn*).

13. The *mu'minūn* are the clients of one another and no longer (under the protection) of the clans.

14. The Jews who will follow our way will enjoy our help and peace and they will not be wronged nor will there be plotting against them.

15. The *mu'minūn* will only make peace jointly. A *mu'min* shall not make peace without the rest of the *mu'minūn* as long as they strive in God's war. Everything shall be done with equality and justice.

16. In every raid we engage in, the *mu'minūn* will share the riding, as long as they are shedding their blood in God's war, for the God-fearing *mu'minūn* are under the best and most proper leadership.

17. No *kāfir* will be permitted to protect the property or the lives of the B. Quraysh, and they may not show preference for one who is not a *mu'min* rather than a *mu'min*.

18. Whoever harms a *mu'min* and kills him intentionally, is to pay with his death, unless the head of the family (*walī*) accepts compensation. All the *mu'minūn* will rise against him as one body.

19. It is forbidden for a *mu'min* who accepts this document and trusts in God and in the Day of Judgment, to assist a rebel or to give him shelter. Whoever gives him assistance or refuge, will be under the curse of God and his wrath on the Day of Judgment and he will not be redeemed or forgiven.

20. Whenever you are divided on some issue, bring your case to God and Muḥammad.

21. As long as the *mu'minūn* are fighting, the Jews will share in their expenses.

22. The Jews of the B. ʿAwf belong to the *umma* of the *mu'minūn*.

23. The Jews are responsible for their accounts and the Muslims are responsible for their clients' accounts as well as their own; but for an evil deed or a crime, only the criminal and his family will be held responsible. (What was said above about the B. ʿAwf is repeated here regarding the Jews who are linked with the other Arab clans in Medina.) As to the Jafna, they are a *baṭn* of Thaʿlaba, and have the same status. As to the B. Shuṭayba, they have the same status as the Jews of B. ʿAwf but only in honest matters and not in criminal ones. As to the clients of B. Thaʿlaba, they have the same status as themselves. The *biṭāna* of the Jews are like themselves.

24. The Jews are not permitted to leave Yathrib without Muḥammad's permission. There is no relinquishing the compensation for an injury from the aggressor or his family, apart from the acts of evil-doers.

25. God will decide as to what is the true meaning of this sentence.

وانه من اعتبط مؤمنا قتلًا عن بينة فانه قود به الا ان يرضي ولي المقتول وان المؤمنين عليه كافة ولا يحل لهم الا قيام عليه

وانه لا يحل لمؤمن اقر بما في هذه الصحيفة وأمن بالله واليوم الآخر ان ينصر محدثًا ولا يؤويه وانته من نصره او آواه فان عليه لعنة الله وغضبه يوم القيمة ولا يؤخذ منه صرف ولا عدل

وانكم مهما اختلفتم فيه من شيء فان مرده الى الله والى محمد

وان اليهود ينفقون مع المؤمنين ما داموا محاربين

وان يهود بني عوف أمة مع المؤمنين

لليهود دينهم وللمسلمين دينهم مواليهم وانفسهم الا من ظلم او اثم فانه لا يوتغ الا نفسه واهل بيته وان لليهود بني النجار مثل ما لليهود بني عوف وان لليهود بني الحارث مثل ما لليهود بني عوف وان لليهود بني ساعدة مثل ما لليهود بني عوف وان لليهود بني جشم مثل ما لليهود بني عوف وان لليهود بني الاوس مثل ما لليهود بني عوف وان لليهود بني ثعلبة مثل ما لليهود بني عوف الا من ظلم واثم فانه لا يوتغ الا نفسه واهل بيته وان جفنة بطن من ثعلبة كانفسهم وان لبني الشطيبة مثل ما لليهود بني عوف وان البر دون الاثم وان موالي ثعلبة كانفسهم وان بطانة يهود كانفسهم

وانه لا يخرج منهم احد الا باذن محمد وانته لا ينحجز على ثار جرح وانته من فتك فينفسه واهل بيته الا من ظلم

وان الله على ابر هذا

26. The Jews will pay their share of expenses and the *muslimūn* will pay their share. The Jews and the *muslimūn* will assist one another against those who fight the people of this document, in kind and just ways and not in evil deeds. For it is forbidden to act against an ally and one must help those who suffer from wickedness.

27. The Jews will bear the expenses together with the *muslimūn*, as long as they (the *muslimūn*) are engaged in fighting.

28. The central area of Yathrib is *ḥarām* to the people of this document.

29. The client is like his patron, but not in matters of impropriety or crime.

30. Protection will not be given to a woman (about to be married) without permission from her clan.

31. Every felony or lecherous act perpetrated between the people of this document, if there is even a hint of a breach, will come before God and Muḥammad, the messenger of God.

32. God will be the one to rightly understand the fair and genuine intention of all that has been said in this document.

33. It is forbidden to grant protection to the Quraysh and those who assist them.

34. The *mu'minūn* will stand together against any aggressor attacking Yathrib and if there is a peace proposal, it is to be addressed to all the *mu'minūn* who fight. Everyone will have his share in that part in which he is fighting.

وان على اليهود نفقتهم وعلى المسلمين نفقتهم وان بينهم النصر على من حارب اهل هذه الصحيفة وان بينهم النصح والنصيحة والبر دون الاثم وانه لم ياتم امرء بحليفه وان النصر للمظلوم

وان اليهود ينفقون مع المؤمنين ما داموا محاربين

وان يثرب حرام جوفها لاهل هذه الصحيفة

وان الجار كالنفس غير مضار ولا اثم

وانه لا تجار حرمة الا باذن اهلها

وانه ما كان بين اهل هذه الصحيفة من حدث او اشتجار يخاف فسادة فان مرده الى الله والى محمد رسول الله

وان الله اتقى ما في هذه الصحيفة ابره

وانه لا تجار قريش ولا من نصرها

وان بينهم النصر علي من دهم يثرب واذا دعوا الي صلح يصلحونه ويلبسونه فانهم يصلحونه ويلبسونه وانهم اذا دعوا الي مثل ذلك فانه لهم علي المومنين الا من حارب في الدين علي كل انسان حصتهم من جانبهم الذي قبلهم

PART TWO

THE JEWS OF BABYLONIA AND PERSIA

CHAPTER ONE

FROM SASANIAN TO ISLAMIC RULE

1. *The uniqueness of Babylonian and Persian Jews and their situation under the Sasanids*

(39) A study of the literary heritage to be found in the preserved records of the Babylonian Jews from ancient times and the early Middle Ages, would undoubtedly take note of the strong emotional depths, the deep roots, the stability and firmness, as well as the uninterrupted continuity of Jewish existence there, together with its mores and customs, as well as its leadership. An example worth mentioning is the statement of the Gaon of Sura, Šemaš Sedeq b. Isaac, in ca. AD 990, in his responsum to a query from the people of Qayrawān concerning Eldad ha-Dani: “.... Most of the sages and prophets went into exile in Babylonia; established the Torah, and settled on the banks of the Euphrates, from the days of the king of Judah, Jehoyachin, to this very day. They were the chain of wisdom and prophecy from which the knowledge of the Torah came to the people....”. We can read similar comments made by Pirqoy b. Bāboy on the Babylonian exile, which took place some twelve years before the destruction of the Temple, “so that the oral law remains with the people of Israel”. This he learned from Micah 4:10: “...for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies”.... “meaning that salvation (will come) first to Babylonia.... that the oral law which comes from the sages in the Babylonian yeshiva as well as the details of ritual law also provided by the sages, were not invented by them, and not from their own wisdom, but were received from Moses on Sinai.... so that the oral tradition of the Torah is not forgotten by the people of Israel”, etc. In contemporary terms we can speak of an uninterrupted historical continuity of some fifteen hundred years of the existence of a vibrant and successful Jewish center, from which the Jewish people derived much of its cultural and spiritual resources. The Babylonian Jews preserved their original culture and everything they created had a distinctly Jewish quality, absorbing merely a few external features from the dominating powers. Throughout Persian rule, and apparently for many successive generations, their spoken language was Judeo-Aramaic, and they did not assimilate or become adjusted to any foreign culture. The Babylonian Jews were obviously aware of the fundamental priority of Palestine, but summed up the historical reality of the time in approximately the following terms: although it is true that Palestine is the homeland of the nation and was promised to them for eternity, for the time being it is a land of evil decrees, while Babylonia is a safe refuge for body and soul. Hence, under Islamic rule the *halākhā* as formu-

lated in Babylonia was preferable. Similar remarks can be found in the Talmud, while in the geonic period we read, for instance, in the words of Pirqoy b. Bāboy: "and those two yeshivot did not witness imprisonment, forced conversions, or plunder, nor were they dominated by Yawan or Edom (i.e. Greece or Rome)...." And further on he says: "....and so said the late Mar Yehudai, that it was decreed that the Palestinian Jews were forbidden to cite the *shema*^c and to pray.... and they submitted to this decree. And now that God had destroyed the kingdom of Edom and its decrees were annulled, the Ishmaelites came and permitted them to study the Torah and cite the *shema*^c and to pray", etc.

Contrary to the opinions we encounter here and there in the margins of contemporary Jewish culture, there is no resemblance between any modern diaspora and the Babylonian diaspora.³⁹

(40) The general opinion, and there is no reason to question it, was that the conditions in which the Jews lived in Babylonia were much more congenial than those of their brethren in Palestine or the rest of the countries under Roman rule, both during its pagan era and its Christian-Byzantine period. Certain doubts arise owing to the information at our disposal related to a number of waves of persecution they experienced from the middle of the fifth century to close on the Muslim conquest. We read in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*: "And there were years of forced conversion and hard times at the end of the kingdom of the Persians, when they were not able to arrange councils nor convoke the yeshivot and act as the Geonim usually do, for a number of years, when our scholars from Pumbedita moved to the neighborhood of Neharde'a to the city of Fīrūz Shābūr".

I am not in the habit of suggesting corrections to ancient documents but on examining the different versions, I am inclined to believe that there may have been an addition on the part of the copyist who was drawn to indicate the time (the end of the kingdom), on the basis of the sentence which follows this fragment, which is a detailed list of the heads of the Pumbedita yeshiva "at the end of the kingdom of the Persians", from the year 900 (i.e. AD 589) while it is clear that the Persian regime ended some fifty years later. These words, i.e. "the end of the kingdom of the Persians" were thus only used originally in the heading to a detailed list of the names and times of the sages of the yeshivot who served during the last fifty years of Persian rule.⁴⁰

(41) The sources on the history of the Jews under Persian rule record three instances of harsh decrees and persecution: in the latter half of the fifth century, at the beginning of the sixth century, and towards the end of the sixth century.

The first incidents began in the days of Yazdigird II (AD 438-457), and continued during the reign of Hormuz III (AD 457-458) and Fīrūz I (AD 458-485), who is *Fīrūz reshī'ā* (the wicked one) in the Talmud. The harsh decrees of that period are mentioned in *Seder tannā'im we-amōra'im* and in

³⁹ See Jellinek, *Bēt ha-midrāsh*, II, 112f.; Pirqoy b. Bāboy, in Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/31), 395f., 398, 402f.; Mann, *Tarbiz*, 6 (1934/5), 79 (the restoration: as proposed by Mann).

⁴⁰ Sherira, *Letter*, 99; this fragment is missing in one manuscript of the *Letter* (see the notes to *ibid.*), which continues directly to the fate of Pumbedita's geonim during the final period of Persian rule.

Sherira Gaon's *Letter*. The execution of the exilarch Hūnā Marī b. Mar Zūtrā is also mentioned, as well as that of two other outstanding sages of that generation, Amēmar b. Yanqā and Mesharshayā b. Pāqōd. *Shemādā de-yazdigird* (the forced conversions of Yazdigird) is recalled on a number of occasions, and it seems that the disturbances began towards the end of this king's life, in 455, and continued until the death of Fīrūz (485). Hamza al-Isfahānī writes about the persecution in the latter half of the tenth century. According to him, in Fīrūz' time, the Jews of Ispahan were blamed for killing two Persian priests and violating their bodies. On Fīrūz' orders, half the Jews of the town were annihilated and their children sold as slaves to a Persian temple. Parallel to this is what was said in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, stating that in Sel. 781 (i.e. AD 470) Jews were being captured by Magians. One of the decrees still issued under Yazdigird's reign (ca. AD 455) was the "cancellation of the Saturday" and during the reign of Fīrūz (ca. AD 470) "all synagogues in Babylonia were closed". We do not know whether these decrees and persecution continued unremittingly for thirty years or whether they were sporadic outbursts.⁴¹

(42) In AD 484, towards the end of Fīrūz' reign, Persia became involved in a series of wars with the "White Huns", Turkish tribes, which ended with the Persians suffering a humiliating defeat. The Arab sources also tell of seven years of drought and starvation at the end of Fīrūz' rule, to the extent that he was obliged to order that the taxes should no longer be collected. Fīrūz' successor (it is not clear whether this was his son or his brother), Balash (485-488), quarreled with the clergy, who finally tore out his eyes and had him banished from the kingdom. Qubād followed him as king. His predecessor was supported by one of the two great aristocratic Persian families, the house of Qaren, under Sukhrā, their leader, while Qubād was supported by the house of Mihrān. From some vague sources which frequently contradict one another, one can conclude that Qubād opposed the aristocracy and the clergy and enjoyed the support of the White Huns.

The revolution of Mazdak occurred during Qubād's reign and there are sources which claim that the king himself also joined the revolution. According to the descriptions in the Arab and Byzantine sources, one can discern that the Mazdak's movement's creed was a branch of the Manichean religion. Some of the sources describe this movement as one which hoped to impose a new social order and ascribed to Mazdak the abolition of classes, private property, and even the sharing of women, that is, the elimination of the family; and it seems that these are based on the slanderous statements of his enemies. According to al-Bīrūnī, for instance, the subject of women was one of the means of gaining the king's support, for his weakness for the opposite sex was known to Mazdak. Shahrastānī, in his

⁴¹ See Grätz (Hebrew), II, 449f.; Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 177; Sherira, *Letter*, 94, 96f., and Lewin's notes, *ibid.*; Hamza al-Isfahānī, 50; Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, 27f., has no additional information in the matter, other than to state that the date of the persecutions under Fīrūz is AM 4234 (AD 474). *Fīrūz reshī'ā*, see *BT, Hullin*, 62b. Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV, 370f., tells of a huge wave of emigration by Babylonian Jews to other countries, such as the Arab Peninsula and East India, as a result of these persecutions; he principally refers to the Jews of Malabar-Cochin and the information on the rights granted by the local ruler to Raban, a Jew who allegedly arrived there in AD 490; however, the correct date of the edict of rights is 1020, as shown by Levi, *REJ*, 89 (1930), 255f.; cf. Mandelbaum, *JSS*, 1 (1939), 424ff.

book on religions and sects, presents a valid and precise survey of the religious attitudes and philosophy of this movement, and it is obvious that these were extremist dualistic views which fit in with Mani's neo-Platonic philosophy as well as with his teachings. The revolutionary rulers evidently continued to reign from approximately 500 until 529. During that period, we are also told of the wars fought by Qubād against the Byzantines and his intervention in the differences between Arab alliances. Both the Arab and the Byzantine sources stress his peaceful aspirations and his moderation. According to Procopius, he was careful not to damage buildings in the Byzantine areas which he had invaded, contrary to his successor Khusraw, who left a trail of destruction in his wake. Evidence of the sympathy the Jews felt for the Persian kingdom during Qubād's reign, has been preserved in an anonymous chronicle (ascribed to Joshua, the Stylite monk). While Qubād was waging his campaign against Edessa (also Ūrhī, Ruhā, and today's Urfa), he stopped near the city of Tela on his way, and laid siege to it. Jews then dug a tunnel under the wall in a sector near their synagogue, contacted the Persian king, and suggested that he break into the town via the tunnel. However, a Christian prisoner who was being held by the Persians, found a way to inform the inhabitants of the town of the Jewish scheme, and when it was discovered, many of the Jews were killed. As to Mazdak and his revolution, their end came about in 529 in the most brutal manner. The Persian king slaughtered them mercilessly. This was Qubād's son and heir, Khusraw Anushirvan, although there are some who ascribe Mazdak's demise to Qubād himself.⁴²

(43) We have little specific information about the status and views of the Jews living in the Persian kingdom during the upheavals of those times and we do not know whether they sympathized with the aristocratic camp or sided with that of Mazdak. The exilarch at the time was Mar Zūtrā II, who inherited this office after the death of his father, Hūnā. He was born in 496 during Qubād's reign, eleven years after Fīrūz' demise. The legend in the *Seder 'ōlām zūṭā* is somehow connected with his personality and undoubtedly contains a grain of historical fact: the exilarch Hūnā offended Ḥanīna (Ḥananiah), head of the yeshiva, who was his father-in-law, as the latter refused to appoint the exilarch's *dayyān*, *rōsh pereq* in the yeshiva. The outcome of this humiliation was that the exilarch was heavily punished by the Almighty. The family was visited by the plague and completely wiped out, leaving only the fetus in the womb of the exilarch's widow, daughter of Ḥanīna, the head of the yeshiva. An elderly red-headed man, who was King David, of course, appears in the head of the yeshiva's dream and rebukes him for destroying his whole 'garden'. When he awoke, the head of the yeshiva realized that the only member of the House of David who was still alive, was that fetus. When the child was born, the head of the yeshiva took him to bring him up and "make a great scholar out of him". In the

⁴² On the seven years of drought under Fīrūz, see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 873. There are various spellings of the name Qubād; in Arab sources, it sometimes appears as Qubādh. On Mazdak, see (principally) Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 885f.; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 209; his creed was dualistic; King Qubādh joined him; Procopius, *Anecd.*, xxxiii, 7. Tela is in northern Mesopotamia, in the Khabūr Valley (east of Urfa); see Dussaud, *Topogr.*, 493; see the story of its conquest: the Chronicle ascribed to Dionysios of Tel Maḥrē, in the part dealing with Joshua Stylites: CSCO, vol. 121, 284; Wright, *Joshua*, 55f.; cf. Segal, *PBA*, 41 (1955), 123.

meantime, someone linked by marriage to the House of David named Rav Puhrā (another version: Puḥdā, which I shall discuss below) realized that all the members of the House of David were gone, bribed the king, and was thus appointed exilarch. When the boy whose name was Mar Zūtrā, like that of his late father, reached his fifteenth year (in approx. 510), he and the head of the yeshiva went to the king and the role of exilarch was taken from Rav Puhrā and passed on to him. Rav Puhrā was subsequently punished by Heaven, for a fly entered his nostrils, he became swollen as a result, and died. Hence, the House of David (i.e. the house of the exilarchs), features a fly on their seals. Below, we shall learn that a similar story is told about Bustanai, who lived more than a century later.

Later on, the chronicler presents a weird and adapted version of the story about the murder of Isaac, a head of the yeshiva whom we cannot identify in the Persian era. It also mentions his going out (Mar Zūtrā?, a reaction to the murder of the head of the yeshiva?) at the head of four hundred men, after he was shown "a pillar of fire". He fought the Persians, inherited the kingdom, and collected taxes (*giziātā*) for seven years; but after seven years, those *dntqy* (?) sinned and were found inebriated from the wine of libation (i.e. of the gentiles) and fornicating in the house of the Persian kings.... The Persians then imprisoned the exilarch Mar Zūtrā and the head of the yeshiva (which one?) and crucified them on the bridge of Māhōzē.

And on the day that Mar Zūtrā was killed, a son was born to him and he was named Mar Zūtrā after his father. I assume that the main issue of the original version before it became flawed, was a description of Mazdak's uprising, in which there was no mention of "Jewish independence" as some scholars hold, but that the author wove into the context, accounts of disasters which befell the leaders of the Babylonian Jews, that is, the assassination of the head of the yeshiva and the exilarch Mar Zūtrā, to the extent that the household of the exilarch was forced to hide for thirty years and the sages of the yeshivot had to escape to Ḥalab (Aleppo). The account continues with Mar Zūtrā b. Mar Zūtrā emigrating to Palestine in AD 520 and becoming "head of the Sanhedrin", an event to which I have devoted a discussion elsewhere.⁴³

⁴³ See in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 72f., two versions of *Seder 'ōlām zūtā*, in Aramaic and Hebrew. See Lazarus, *JJGL*, 10 (1890), 157ff.; Schechter, *MGWJ*, 39 (1894), 23ff., who cite details on this chronicle; its version extant today was written by a man named Jerahmeel in ca. 1050. Schechter edited this chronicle from MS De Rossi no. 541; the chronicle in that edition states that it was originally written in AM 4564, AD 804; as to the manuscript, Schechter assumed that it was written in the first half of the fourteenth century. Lazarus printed, beneath the main text, *variae lectiones* after five early prints (Mantua 1514; Basel 1527; Venice 1545; Basel 1580; Amsterdam 1711, 1717) and two manuscripts (Paris no. 1279; Oxford Bodl MS Heb e 8). The Aramaic version apparently seems to be the earlier one; it contains several terms whose interpretation has been lost, such as the above-mentioned *dntqy*; an additional such term is *br'myd* (versions: *rb'myr*; *myd rb*)—"on that day, a great *br'myd* rebelled". See attempts at interpretation in: Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV, 396. A fragment of *Seder 'ōlām zūtā* can also be found in TS 10 K 9.6, which begins: "... a son to Mar Zūtrā, who was named Mar Zūtrā, after his father", etc.; and ends: "These are (together) 89 generations". What appears to be the most credible interpretation of *dntqy* was proposed by Gruenbaum, *ZDMG*, 23 (1869), 636, n. 2: *zanādiqa*, the Arabic term for Manichaeans (which was subsequently also used for any other dissidents); if this is true, it would be reasonable to assume that the fragment, garbled by copyists, did not refer to Jews, but rather, to the

(44) The third incident occurred in about Sel. 900, i.e. AD 589. As mentioned in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, this was the year in which Sherira begins his list of geonim: "... at the end of the Persian kingdom from Sel. 900". Indeed, as Grätz also understood, he was referring in his *Letter* to "years of forced conversions and troubles at the end of the Persian reign", when the law courts and the yeshivot were unable to function (as one realizes from Sherira's text). We learn from external sources that this was the era of the rebellion against the Persian king led by Bahram Chubīn, one of the leading Persian aristocrats and commander of the army. It seems that there were many Jews who supported the rebellion. This was also the year in which King Hormuz IV was assassinated.

To a certain extent, it is the Byzantine writer, Theophylactus Simokatta, who sheds light on the Jewish participation in the disturbances. According to his account, the heir to the throne, Khusraw II, Peroz, (in the Arabic sources: Abarwīz), escaped to Byzantium after his father's murder, and received a promise from the Byzantines (the eternal enemies of the Persians) that they would intervene in what was happening in Persia and would return him to the throne; indeed the Byzantines were true to their word and captured the capital Māhōzē. Many Jews who had been involved in Bahrām Chubīn's rebellion were killed on Khusraw's orders. Theophylactus adds here some denigrating remarks about the Jews, saying that they enjoyed boundless wealth but that they were a corrupt and faithless people given to rebellion and aspiring to gain power and authority. The disturbances occurred in AD 591, according to him, and lasted for some two to three years. Abraham ibn Da'ūd, in his *Sefer ha-qabbālā* moves the date forward by fifty years, that is, from AD 539 to AD 589, apparently due to his misunderstanding of the contents of Sherira's *Letter*. It is clear that there was a gap of two generations between these events and the end of the Persian kingdom. Thus we may conclude that there is no evidence to indicate that the persecution of the Jews actually took place during the Persian state's final years. On the contrary, it can be seen from the sources that the Jews showed a preference for the Persian regime somewhat earlier than the Arab conquests, that is, in the period of war between Persia and Byzantium, which began in AD 611, and during which Persia first conquered Syria, and then Palestine and Egypt as well.⁴⁴

movement of Mazdak. Sherira, *Letter*, 98, mentions an exilarch who died in Sel. 819, AD 508, i.e. in Mazdak's time. Grätz (Hebrew), III, p. 386, n. 1, assumes that this fragment describes a Jewish rebellion led by Mar Zūtrā; this opinion is repeated by others as well. Assuming that the Jews were victims of Mazdak, he concluded that the rebellion in question was an act of defense by Jews against chaos and anarchy. See Baron, *SRHJ*, II, 182f., who speaks—in a rather equivocal manner—about the suffering of the Jews as a result of the religious fanaticism practiced by Mazdak's people, when the revolution became more radical, following a period of cooperation with the king. These views are nowhere endorsed in the sources. On Mar Zūtrā junior and his emigration to Palestine, see Gil, *Hist.*, 495.

⁴⁴ Sherira, *Letter*, 99; cf. Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV, 13f., 404f. On these events, see: Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, II, 213f.; Simokatta, Bonn ed., 218; cf. Baron, *SRHJ*, III, 59. See Ibn Da'ūd, 34: "since the yeshivot were closed for some 50 years...". Grossman, *Rāshūt*, 20f. and n. 19, writes that the Persians, toward the end of their rule, treated the Jews harshly, and refers, "for example", to Sherira, *Letter*, without mentioning any other sources; there are no such sources. Ibn Da'ūd, 31, correctly understood the general state of affairs: "They had many other kings (after Hormuz I, from AD 273) who were friendly to the Jews, until the kingdom of Ishmael attained power and destroyed (the Persians) from off the earth". The matter of the

2. *The Jews of Babylonia and Persia and the conquest*

(45) After the death of Muḥammad in 632, the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula rebelled against the Muslims and the central authority in Medina, and chose a set of leaders to rule over them who claimed they were prophets. This was a movement of widespread rebellions known as the *ridḍa*. The great Muslim army, however, whose mission it was to invade the areas governed by the Byzantines, and even managed to make initial advances into Palestine, turned against these rebellions and appeased the tribes one after the other, on the orders of Abū Bakr, the caliph who was the Prophet's first heir. To a large extent, one can ascribe the suppression of the revolt to Khālid ibn al-Walīd, who only a few years earlier, had been one of the most talented commanders of the heathen Mecca and only joined Islam after its conquest. Earlier on, he had received the title *sayf Allah* ("God's sword") from the Prophet, and after the suppression of the *ridḍa*, he would triumph throughout the campaigns in Babylonia, Palestine, and Syria.

After the suppression of the rebellion, Abū Bakr mobilized the tribes to take part in the conquests outside the Arabian Peninsula. Slightly more than twenty years had passed since the beginning of the series of upheavals which shook the very foundations of the two major powers of that era—Persia and Byzantium. As mentioned above, Persia began a campaign against Byzantium in 611 and conquered the countries along the eastern basin of the Mediterranean, i.e., Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. At the peak of their success, in 626, the Persians even threatened Constantinople, but the

relations between Jews and Christians in the Persian kingdom belongs to this period as well. The harsh hostility between the two camps is confirmed by several sources; see them in Labourt, *Christianisme*, 39, 58 n. 2, 64, 69. On the other hand, we should not conclude from Christian legends of a polemic nature, which generally end with the conversion of Jews, that there were in fact waves of conversion from Judaism to Christianity, *pace* Morony, *Iraq*, 308 (see section 174 below). It is also worthwhile to mention a few passages in geonic responsa which allude to an interdiction, in the Persian kingdom, against reading the *haḡfārā* after noon on Saturdays (!), or which state that Jews used to be forced to bury Persian dead, even on the Sabbath. These passages exist in conflicting versions and contain no real historical information, even though such incidents may certainly have occurred. This, *pace* Ginzberg, who published the fragments and ascribed them to the alleged persecutions of Mazdak; see *Geon.*, II, 216, 220, 298, 322. The passages bear a striking similarity to Pirqoy b. Bāḡoy's comments on persecutions in Palestine; see Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/31), 397. The events related to the wars between Persia and Byzantium early in the seventh century, and the sources dealing with the attitude of the Jews in that period, have been discussed elsewhere by me: Gil, *Hist.*, 5f. One can hardly doubt that the Persians maintained a policy of preference toward the Jews under their rule, and that they applied that policy to lands conquered by them as well. On the other hand, no credence should be granted to information, which appears to stem principally from relatively late Christian sources, with regard to the Jews' having been involved in acts of oppression and murder of Christians, especially in Jerusalem. It should be remembered that Khusraw is said to have shown favor to the Christians; Shīrīn, his mistress, was a Christian; it was even said that he sided with the Monophysites, who represented the majority among Christians in the lands conquered by the Persians, against the Nestorians, who were the leading Christian Church in Persia proper; in this matter, see Nöldeke, *Aufsätze*, 124f.; and see *ibid.*, 129, his summarization of the end of the war and the return of the Holy Cross to Jerusalem on September 14, 629 (*ʿid al-ṣalīb*), as well as on the rebellion of the Persian Army, led by Shahbarāz, and the capitulation and execution of the latter on June 9, 630.

internal differences in Persia, particularly within the royal court, made naught of the aspirations of the victors and after a series of dreadful defeats, they were decisively beaten by the Byzantines.

In 633, when it was obvious that the kingdom of Persia was in an insecure condition and that it could not adequately defend its western frontier, the Banū Bakr b. Wā'il, an Arab tribe located on the western banks of the Euphrates, crossed the river and invaded Babylonian territory. They were headed by al-Muthannā ibn Hāritha. In those times, tribal invasions were commonplace and occurred frequently in both kingdoms. Even in the days of Justinian, that successful and gifted emperor, there were persistent Saracen invasions throughout the Byzantine lands, from Egypt to the Persian border, leaving a trail of destruction and ruin and causing a notable decline in the population of the border areas. As to the Persian kingdom, prior to what had happened in 633, there had been the battle of Dhū Qār (ca. 605), in which the Bakr b. Wā'il defeated the Persian army, an event which must have afforded these tribesmen considerable pride and a willingness to repeat their heroic feats.

There is some doubt concerning the link between Muthannā and the Muslims during that period, although according to some sources, Muthannā had accepted Islam before starting on the invasion. At any rate, he did not receive any assistance from the Muslim center, Medina. Heading his forces, Muthannā succeeded in conquering the unfortified Hira on the banks of the Euphrates. Hira had been an important tribal center (of the Banū Lakhm). It was only many months later that limited reinforcements of the *anṣār* under Khālīd ibn al-Walīd's command came from Medina to strengthen Muthannā's forces.

Only then did the Persian army feel that it was threatened and began to organize its defense. Following the events in all their details, one realizes that this was a difficult campaign facing a strong opposition, despite the fact that the Arabs finally succeeded in performing impressive military feats. Contributing to these victories were the extreme devotion and risks taken by the Muslim fighters as well as the easy mobility of their camel corps which moved their forces and supplies from front to front. To this was added the weakness of the enemy led by a disorganized command consisting of the local nobility.

After the serious blow suffered by the Muslims in "the battle of the bridge" (634), in which the Muslim army was saved from utter annihilation by Muthannā's heroism, the Persians were subsequently defeated in the battle of Qādisiyya, to the southwest of Hira in AD 636. This was quickly followed by the Arabs taking Māhōzē, a group of cities of which Ctesiphon on the Tigris, was the Persian kings' capital. The Persian army was led by Rustam, a member of the Persian aristocratic elite, while Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb placed the Muslim army under the command of Sa'd b. Abī'l-Waqqāṣ, one of Muḥammad's former comrades-in-arms. Sa'd led the army despite the fact that he was not well. He carried out this role from a command post far from the battlefield, which was something of an innovation for the Arabs.

The Arab chroniclers, who wrote many generations after these events, and who came from a relatively cultured and developed society, describe with amusement, incidents which stemmed from the encounters between

the somewhat primitive and uneducated fighters and the magnificence and luxury of the Persian palaces, such as the use of camphor instead of salt in their soup or feeding their dogs on golden platters.

After its defeat at Qādisiyya, the Persian army was forced to retreat northward to the slopes of the Zagros mountains, where it tried to organize a new front, but to no avail. The 'Jazīra', the northern part of Mesopotamia, was quickly taken, and in the south, the Muslims took Ahwāz, the capital of the Khūzistān region. The final victory was achieved by the Muslims in the battle of Nihāwand, to the southwest of Hamadān (the biblical Achmetha) in 642. From here onward, the Muslim forces continued to advance slowly and moved through enormous distances surrounded by hostile populations. The Persian king, Yazdigird III, retreated at first to Ispahan, and from there to Iṣṭakhr, i.e. Persepolis. He then fled eastward to Khurāsān, where he met his end at the hands of a local Persian nobleman (651/2).⁴⁵

(46) There is clearly no doubt that at the time, the Jews of Babylonia and Persia constituted a very important element in the population, perhaps even a leading element numerically. Even three hundred years after the conquest, the Muslim geographers were still describing the Jews as being one of the most important sectors of Persia's population. According to al-Iṣṭakhrī, they occupied third place, after the Zoroastrians and the Christians, and even the Jerusalemite al-Muqaddasī wrote that they came immediately after the Zoroastrians, that is, that their numbers were greater than that of the Christians, and particularly high in the region of Media (*Jibāl*), in places like Hamadān, Ḥulwān, Nihāwand, Qarmisīn, (i.e. Kirmanshāh). If their numbers were indeed large during this period, how much more so would this apply to the end of the Persian era, and still more so to Babylonia, the land between the Euphrates and the Tigris. During the first years of Islam,

⁴⁵ A description of the period following the death of the Prophet may be found in any book on the history of early Islam. See e.g.: Von Grunebaum, *Class. Isl.*, 52ff.; Vecchia Vaglieri, *Camb. Hist. of Isl.*, I, 58ff. On the razzias in Justinian's time, see Procopius, *Anecd.*, xviii, 21-27; for the battle of Dhū Qār, see Nöldeke, *Aufsätze*, 126; Hīra was not fortified, as it relied upon a huge moat (*khandaq*) and fortifications built by Shābūr II (310-376) in the desert, west of the Euphrates; see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 476; there was a defense trench named after Sābūr (who is Shābūr) on the western border of the kingdom, in order to defend it against the Arab tribes; Shābūr even ordered the construction of a fortified city, called Nasr (?), for that purpose. Watchtowers and fortresses were constructed along the defense trench, which ran along the Euphrates to the sea. Cf. Talbot Rice, *Antiquity*, 6 (1932), 278; Nyberg, *B. Karlgren Jub. Vol.*, 318. Nyberg discusses the Pahlavi manuscript of AD 1332, where he believes an early source from the Sasanid period is preserved, containing details on cities under Persian rule, the circumstances of their founding, and the like. He states that the manuscript provides information on "the fortress of the Arabs", and concludes that this refers to Hīra. Frye, *Wiet Mem. Vol.*, 10f., writes—following this study by Nyberg—that "the walls of defense" constituted a part of the huge ring of fortifications which defended the entire kingdom. Also situated on this fortified line was the fortress of 'Ayn Tamr, inhabited by Jews and Christians; it stood west of the Euphrates, in the vicinity of Hīt; a great many prisoners were captured from this fortress by the Arabs, including the Jewish family of Aba, father of Ḥumrān, who became governor of Kūfa (see section 175 below); see Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 247; cf. Le Strange, *Lands*, 65, 81, and the map opposite p. 25. Donner, *Conquests*, 174, not only points out Hīra as a tribal center; he mentions "heavily Arabized towns along the right bank of the Euphrates", adding Ubulla to Hīra, "and others", but without specifying any sources—and, in fact, there are none. He also disregards traditions that indicate the contrary, as they contain details of taxation in these places, and generally indicating that the population was non-Arab and did not convert to Islam; this shall be discussed in greater detail below.

the Arab sources do not supply us with much in the way of information about the Babylonian Jews. Nevertheless we do learn from Ibn Qutayba (who died in 889) that the vicinity of Sura was still mainly inhabited by Jews. And Ibn al-Qiftī cites the story of the physician Sinān (in the tenth century), who needed permission from the vizier, ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā, to treat the people of Sura during the plague, “and they are Jews” (and the reply was: that the Muslims must be treated first of all and then the unbelievers and the animals). Some of the sources claim that Hīra, formerly the B. Lakhm’s center, which was close to Fīrūz-Shābūr which is Neharde’a, al-Anbār (in the same neighbourhood as Pumbedita), still had a sizable Jewish population during the first century of Muslim rule.

Jewish settlements in Babylonia during the reign of the Persian kingdom were concentrated in three groups: (1) in the neighborhood of the Euphrates, around Neharde’a (i.e. Fīrūz-Shābūr) and Pumbedita; (2) In the southern area around Sura; (3) the eastern area around Māhōzē and the Rādhān canals (i.e. Jūkhā). This division still existed during the Muslim era, as one can read in Nathan the Babylonian (in the middle of the tenth century). In addition to these, there were naturally many Jewish communities in Persia itself, from the Nahrwān canal eastward.

We have no source which can supply us with comprehensive and detailed information on the attitudes of the Jewish population in Babylonia and Persia towards the Muslim conquest apart from the “Bustanai story” and a few Muslim sources whose meaning has still to be divulged. These will serve as the major basis of the discussion below. Modern Jewish historiography viewed the Muslim conquest in a very positive light from the aspect of the Jews living in these areas, as if this was self-understood, and as if the Jews welcomed the invaders with open arms.⁴⁶

3. *The sources of the Bustanai story*

(47) Grätz has already discussed the Bustanai story in detail but he had much fewer sources at his disposal than we have today. At the beginning of the twenties of this century, Tykocinski published a study which was based on almost all the Jewish sources we are aware of today. My purpose in discussing them again is to summarize the information from the Jewish sources, including those which were published after Tykocinski’s study; to examine and determine, as far as is possible, the dates on which they were conceived, as well as their reliability; to reveal a number of sources from Muslim literature and to clarify their contribution to our knowledge of the history of the Jews of Babylonia in the period under discussion.

⁴⁶ Iṣṭakhrī, 139; Muqaddasī, *Āqālim*, 439; Ibn Qutayba, *‘Uyūn*, 214; Ibn al-Qiftī, 193; Hīra: Dhahabī, *Ta’rīkh*, III, 123; Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 78, 81f., 85f. On the Jews’ allegedly favorable attitude toward the conquest, see Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV, 123f. Malter, *Saadia*, 98, writes of the overwhelming support shown for the conquerors by the Jewish population; similarly also Baron, *SRHJ*, III, 88f. Neusner, in *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, III (2), 917, also writes of a warm reception given to the Arabs by the Jews. Grossman, *Rāshūt*, 10, 20f. n. 19, speaks of the Jewish fidelity toward the Muslim conquerors, and on “various important Muslim sources about the aid given by Jews to the Arabs at the start of their conquests”; there are, however, no such sources regarding the Jews of Babylonia and Persia; this aspect of the events shall be elucidated below.

Tykocinski assembled eight fragments dealing with our subject and others have been added since. These fragments do not belong to any historical works or chronicles, apart from an extract from Ibn Da'ūd's *Sefer ha-qabbālā*. It would probably be more fitting to refer to them as folklore or popular traditions. Their particular characteristic, however, is a tendentiousness, traces of which are frequently felt even in what appears to be objectivity, which is not exactly unintentional. The major sources of this affair are an expression of the struggle on all fronts, continued for generations against personalities of the exilarchic family. (This struggle will be discussed below in chapter two.)

A basic knowledge of the ancient sources is contained in a gaon's responsum, of which we have three versions at present. We also have a story written in Judeo-Arabic, a copy of which belongs to the first half of the eleventh century. The rest of the sources are actually adaptations of what is included in these two sources.

One version of the gaon's responsum has been known for a long time. It is included in the collection entitled *Sha'arē sedeq* published in Salonika in 1792 and attributed to Hayy Gaon, and in a parallel version, to his father, Sherira Gaon. Heads of the Pumbedita yeshiva were a party to the factional dispute with David b. Zakkai, the exilarch who was himself an offspring of Bustanai. Judah, Sherira Gaon's grandfather, was undoubtedly among those who were challenging David b. Zakkai and his ally, Kohen Sedeq, as Mann already understood from what Sherira says in his *Letter*: "Then Mevasser Gaon and his scholars separated; the most choice scholars were on his side"; and can one say that Sherira's grandfather, Rav Yehuda, was not one of the choice. Elsewhere Sherira Gaon feels the need to distance himself from the Bustanai family: "our forefathers belonged to the exilarchic house; however they renounced all the bad habits of the exilarchs.... nor are we of the offspring of Bustanai, as our fathers joined the scholars of the yeshivot before his time". Sherira Gaon does not even refer to the Babylonian exilarchic family as "the House of Bustanai" although all of them were Bustanai's offspring; but he writes in his letter to the people of "Halah and Habor": "half the authority of Babylonia belongs to the family of Kafnai" (Bustanai's father); since the schism hinted at in his *Letter* obviously occurred before Bustanai, and what he wanted to stress was that there was the existence of another branch (and perhaps a number of branches) apart from Bustanai, i.e. before the affair of the Persian princess.

The manuscript containing the responsum printed in the *Sha'arē sedeq* collection is not available to us, but two parallel handwritten versions have been preserved in the Cairo Geniza, and one in particular, retained the supposed early version of the original responsum and details (especially names) relating to the Bustanai affair and the sons born to him by the captured Persian princess presented to him by the Muslim ruler. In the gaon's responsum, the Bustanai story is a case in point which touched on a halachic issue concerning the status of a slave who bore sons to her Jewish master as well as relating to the status of these sons. The opinion of the Babylonian Talmud on this matter is: "a (Jewish) man does not have intercourse like intercourse with a prostitute". In modern terms, this would read: the onus probandi does not rest upon the children of the slavewoman (in this case, the Persian princess); they do not have to prove that their father

had indeed freed their mother as the law requires and that she was properly immersed in order to be converted. One can discern from the language of the responsum that the writer had the affair on his mind and that he had obvious reservations regarding the decision of the *dayyān* and the geonim who legalized Bustanai's offspring. According to the *Shā'arē šedeq* version, which seems to be the original one, it is "Mar Rav Ḥaninai, *dayyān* of the Gate" who was responsible for their legalization; apparently referring to a judge in the exilarch's court (as we learn from the expression, *dayyānā de-vāvā*). In the continuation, Palṭoi, Gaon of Pumbedita, and Naṭrūnai, Gaon of Sura, are mentioned as being those who, a few generations later, replied to Eleazar Aluf of Lucena in Spain, that the offspring of Bustanai (and similar cases) were considered freedmen according to the law. In another responsum, in *Shā'arē šedeq*, which undoubtedly stems from the same source and deals with the same matter, i.e. the offspring of slave-women—it is said of a son born to a slavewoman—that he does not absolve the family from the levirate marriage laws, and nevertheless, they are treated as freedmen. Such was the responsum (of the above-mentioned) Palṭoi Gaon and Naṭrūnai Gaon to that "Eleazar Aluf of Spain". Nevertheless it is surprising that some of the best scholars did not notice the gaon's reservations in the above-mentioned responsum. For it clearly states that: "....this matter was appealed against but the outcome was that it was covered up" (in the *Shā'arē šedeq* version); and "they even relied on the rulers and authorities of the kingdom, for they were related to royalty as their mother's brother had been a *marzubān*". And in the continuation: "and this is how we consider it: if a man had intercourse with his slavewoman, she is still considered a slave, unless he immerses her (for conversion) in order to free her, in the presence of three (witnesses).... and the scholars say: both in Palestine and abroad.... R. Yohānān said: the law is as stated by the scholars"; and further: "it is the gaon of Maḥsiyya (= Sura) (who wrote such an opinion on this matter; i.e. confusing it with the principle that a (Jewish) man does not have intercourse like intercourse with a prostitute.... as he was himself a relation of the offspring of Shahriyār" (Bustanai's son; as in the Geniza version, No.1, Vol. II of my Hebrew version). The gaon severely reprimands the gaon of Sura (evidently from the ninth century), for not arriving at his judgment in accordance with the law, out of favouritism, and adds that the gaon of Sura was a relative of the Persian's sons. These are indeed very serious accusations. The background to these statements evidently stemmed from the rivalry between the geonim of Pumbedita and the offspring of Bustanai, David b. Zakkai and his heirs.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV, 125ff., 433ff. Grätz based his discussion principally on the *Shā'arē šedeq* version of the responsum ascribed to Hayy Gaon, and on *Ma'asē bēi david* (see below). The translator and editor of Grätz' *History* into Hebrew, S.P. Rabinowitz, added, at his own initiative, a special significance to this latter source, himself pointing it out—see *ibid.*, 126, n. 1. In addition, Grätz was, of course, aware of the fragment of Ibn Da'ūd, and also added a fragment from Bar Hebraeus to his sources (see section 64 below). See Tykocinski, *Devir*, 1 (1922/3), 145ff.; a summary of the Bustanai matter may be found in Goode, *JQR*, 31 (1940/41), 154ff.; everything written in that summary has already been stated by earlier scholars. See documents 1, 2. See *Shā'arē šedeq*, 2b, 3a (part 1, paragraph 17); 25a (part 6, paragraph 15); Sherira, *Letter*, 92f.; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 150 and n. 8; Rapoport, *Töledōt*, I, 168f., n.1. already discussed the matter of Bustanai, basing his account on *Ma'asē bēi dāvid* and on the responsum in *Shā'arē šedeq*, with its two versions, and stat-

(48) The Arabic tale from the Geniza came to light from two almost identical fragments, one (then) in the British Museum (published by Margoliouth in 1902), and the other in Cambridge (published by Worman in 1908). Another fragment from the Geniza is to be found in the Adler Collection in the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York (published by Alexander Marx in 1927). I identified a fourth fragment in Cambridge in the new series of the Taylor-Schechter collection. Apart from the first Cambridge fragment (TS 12.504) the fragments undoubtedly belong to a text copied by Sahlān b. Abraham, the leader of the 'Babylonian' community in Fustat, in his characteristic handwriting. Towards the end of this text, we learn that the author was "our Lord and Master" Nathan Gaon, as it was handed down by his forefathers, the holy (heads of the) yeshivot and by his teacher, the late Ḥushiel *rēsh bē rabbānān* (below, sec. 122). The date of this copy is Sel. 1352, i.e. 1040-1041. Nathan b. Abraham was the gaon Solomon b. Judah's rival. Nathan struggled to occupy the seat of the gaon in Palestine, after having been chosen and appointed by his supporters (in AD 1038-1042). In fact, the text was being copied at the height of the dispute between the two. It is known that the 'Babylonians' in Fustat, at least the majority, were inclined in favour of Nathan b. Abraham, and we are also aware that Nathan had been Ḥushiel's pupil in Qayrawān. One can surmise that the origin of the story is Babylonian and we have here further evidence of the ties that were formed between Hayy Gaon and Ḥushiel, for the latter had received the story from Hayy Gaon or one of his followers. The story contains outright slander about the exilarchic family. Whatever was Sahlān b. Abraham's purpose in copying a story which was apparently meant to be distributed? The most likely explanation is that he wanted to discredit a member of the exilarch's household, who was an enthusiastic

ing that the reading of these versions should be improved by comparing them with each other. The more detailed version is that of I, including references to earlier publications (see the preamble to this document). TS 8 G 1 was also printed by Assaf, *Teshivōt* (1941/2), 61. Tykocinski printed all three versions, treating them as if they were completely independent of each other; see *Devir*, 1 (1922/3), 148. On the house of Kafnai, see 28, x, line 17. Baron, *SRHJ*, VI, 11, considers the gaon's responsum to constitute a defense of the legitimacy of the house of Bustanai; he may have been inspired by the view of Eppenstein, *MGWJ*, 52 (1908), 330f., who also found there a favorable attitude toward the house of the exilarch. On intercourse with a female slave in the Talmud: BT, *Yevāmōt*, 107a; *Ketubbōt*, 73a; *Gittin* 81b. Abū 'l-Faraj Ibn al-Ṭayyib, writing at the beginning of the eleventh century, quotes the rule followed by (Eastern) Christians: "If a man had sons from a slave woman... while he has no legitimate wife, and did not declare before priests: this is my wife and these are my sons, while it is known that they lived in his house and it is public knowledge that these sons were born of a slave woman, the slave woman shall be considered free and the sons shall inherit his property, and his relatives are not permitted to enslave them as if they were slaves; but all this provided that he had no heirs who are his sons (from a free woman), in which case they do not have the status of inheriting sons". Also: "If a man freed his slave woman while she was pregnant, but did not enact the liberation on his (unborn) son as well, the son is his" (i.e. his property, his slave); see Ibn al-Ṭayyib, *Fiqh*, II, 37, 61. Maqdisi, *Bad'*, IV, 39, knows that it is forbidden for Jews to have intercourse with their slave women, unless they free them and marry them, and that, if a man had intercourse with a slave woman, he is obligated by law to liberate her. On Muslim laws in this matter, which differ from each other depending on the *madhhabs*, see Musallam, 34f.; he discusses the topic from the standpoint of the right to have intercourse with slave women, and the various recommendations on contraception. The mention of the connection with Lucena in that responsum led to the assumption that the gaon who wrote it was Naṭrūnāi b. Hillai; see Schechter, *Saadyana*, 77, n. 1; this, however, is open to doubt.

supporter of Solomon b. Judah. He may have had in mind Daniel b. Azariah, who was called *shevīv* (the spark of) Bustanai in a poem dedicated to him. It should be noted that Nathan Gaon's identity was not known to Marmorstein, who was the first to mention this fragment and assumed that Nathan was Hushiel's son. At first Mann was unable to identify him, nor could Marx, who supposed that Nathan Gaon was none other than Nathan the Babylonian (the author of the story about Baghdad), and also claimed that this text supports Friedländer's argument that Nathan the Babylonian's story was originally written in Arabic. A few years later, however, when Mann had explored the history of the geonim in Palestine in depth, was he able to discover the true identity of Nathan Gaon and to realize that the distributor of the story intended to assist Nathan Gaon in his struggle against Solomon b. Judah.

And yet it seems reasonable to seek the origins of this story among the challengers of the "sons of Zakkai" that is, David and Josiah b. Zakkai, who will be discussed below in the chapter on the exilarchs. Evidently the early development of the story began at the onset of the tenth century and it also should be recalled that the personalities involved in the serious rift with David b. Zakkai were Mevasser Gaon (ca. 918) and Saadia Gaon (ca. 930). There is a striking resemblance between the story of David b. Zakkai and his son Judah's offence against Saadia Gaon as told by Nathan the Babylonian, and the exilarch's offence against his father-in-law, head of the yeshiva in the Bustanai story; while this part of the story is also very similar to Mar Zūtrā's story, which belongs to the Persian period. It is possible that the author of these stories about Bustanai, or at least of one version, was Saadia Gaon. They were used by the Babylonian yeshivot in their struggle against the exilarchic family.

One should also recall the prolonged rivalry between the early Palestinian geonim (whom Nathan b. Abraham apparently considered himself heir to) and the Bustanai lineage, a rivalry expressed some 120 years earlier, in the Palestinian gaon's support of the followers of the Pumbedita yeshiva headed by Mevasser Gaon, and against the exilarch David b. Zakkai. A certain difficulty arises in the fact that the offspring of ʿAnan and Boaz, that is, the sons of ʿAnan b. Daniel and Boaz b. Jehoshafat, and, as it seems, particularly his son David, were supporters of Saadia Gaon in his conflict with Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, known as b. Sarjāda. There is another possibility, which is that the principal target of the attack were the contemporaries of Sherira Gaon, Zakkai's remote relatives, i.e. Hezekiah b. Judah b. David, and David, son of the above-mentioned Hezekiah, who lived during the latter half of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh century, as well as Solomon b. Josiah and Azariah b. Solomon, who were the exilarchs of the time. I have already mentioned Sherira Gaon's severe reservations concerning the Bustanai dynasty.

While we are pondering over the authorship of the Arab story about Bustanai and its intention, we are also faced with the problem of the relationship between Mar Zūtrā's story in *Seder ʿolām zūtā* and the Bustanai story, for we have noted that the two stories feature identical components. Lazarus has already expressed his opinion on the matter. His view was that the Bustanai story was the first to be conceived and that its purpose was to prove that after the exilarch's lineage had suffered utter destruction,

Bustanai was the only remaining offspring of the exilarch's dynasty, i.e. the House of David.

The story was therefore intended to serve the Bustanai family in their struggle against other pretenders who claimed kinship to the exilarchs. The offspring of Mar Zūtrā then appeared on the scene and they were descendants of the exilarch who, curiously enough, were successful in Palestine and whose genealogy differed from that of Bustanai's offspring, and shifted its exclusivity to Mar Zūtrā, of the more ancient forefathers of the dynasty. Lazarus' fundamental idea is quite reasonable, that is, that such a story, about the nearly total destruction of the House of David, could have had such a purpose. Lazarus, however, knew the story of the annihilation only from the late version of the Bustanai story, that is, the one included in the *ma'asē bēt dāvid*. The original story, however, which was preserved in the Geniza, tries to prove precisely the opposite, that is, it completely disqualifies all the offspring of the house of Bustanai. On the other hand, Mar Zūtrā's story is written as praise and is not intended as censure. The only criticism it contains is directed against R. Puhrā, who tried to oust him from the exilarchy. Hence we must see in Mar Zūtrā's story the earlier version and the model for Bustanai's story.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See 2 and its preamble. On Sahlān b. Abraham, see Gil, *Hist.*, I, 525f. and more references there; Bareket, *Shaf'ir*, 172-187. The conflict regarding the position of gaon in Palestine: Gil, *Hist.*, 691-718, and especially p. 711, on the support of Solomon b. Judah by Daniel b. Azariah. See the poem in BL Or 5557K, f. 8, edited by Fleischer, *Shalem*, I (1974), 62ff.; cf. Mann, *Jews*, II, 220; Gil, *Hist.*, 660, n. 125, 720f., n. 158. Hayy Gaon appears to have been opposed to the priestly house to which Solomon b. Judah was related, which explains his animosity toward Solomon b. Judah himself; he appears to have supported the other priestly family, which had headed the gaonate in Palestine during an earlier period, and from which Nathan b. Abraham was descended on his mother's side. On this matter, see: Ben-Sasson, *Zion*, 51 (1986), 397ff. See Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 289f., who opposes the opinion of Aptowitzer, Vienna, *Jahresbericht*, 37-39 (1933), 97, who rather found in the Bustanai story a proof of the paucity of relations between Hayy Gaon and Hushiel, as the responsum written by the gaon speaks of the five sons of Bustanai, two of whom were born of his Jewish wife, whereas the Arabic version mentions three sons, all born of his Persian wife. See also Mann, *Texts*, I, 204ff., on Hushiel's connections with Babylonia, such as his title, *rēsh bē rabbānān* ("head of the scholars' house"), which was a Babylonian title. See also: Marmorstein, *Midrash*, 76; Marx, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 77f.; Mann, *Texts*, I, 332; Tykocinski, *Devir*, I (1922/3), 155ff., tried to prove that the story was conceived in the thirteenth century, as there was not yet a proper understanding of the sources at the time of his writing. Mann assumed that the sting of the story was directed toward the Karaites as well, since it also mentions 'Anan and all those called Boaz among the offspring of Bustanai, and these names figure in the genealogy of the Karaite *nesi'im*; but the fusion between the Karaites and the *nesi'im* of the house of 'Anan did not occur until the late ninth century, as I have shown; see Gil, *Hist.*, 657ff., 777-784, 790-794; and see *ibid.*, 568, 654, for the matter of the Palestinian gaon who supported the faction of Mevasser Gaon in his struggle against David b. Zakkai. The author of the Bustanai story lumps them all together—those who accepted Karaism and the "sons of Zakkai"; the primary reference here is probably to David b. Zakkai. See 'Anan, Boaz, the son of Zakkai, in 2, e, line 7. On the support given to Saadia Gaon by the sons of Boaz, see Gil, *Hist.*, 790-794; on the family of the exilarchs in the second half of the tenth century, see *ibid.*, 540, 544f. See Lazarus, *JJGL*, 10 (1890), 24f., 166ff.; *ibid.*, 25f., he shows that the *Seder 'olām zūta* (including the story of Mar Zūtrā) was written in the early ninth century; indeed, at that time, it was the offspring of Mar Zūtrā who headed the yeshiva of Palestine; cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 653f. In my article in *Tarbiz*, 48 (1979), 45, I expressed the opposite opinion—namely, that the Mar Zūtrā story was the later one; I have since renounced that opinion. The story of the fly (a mosquito, in the Arabic version) which caused the death of R. Puhrā, the usurper, is reminiscent of the legend of Titus' death in BT, *Gittin* 56b; there is a parallel Muslim tradition as well;

(49) In the gaon's responsum, the kernel of the story unfolds as follows: Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb gave the captive daughter of the Persian king to Bustanai, the exilarch. This Persian princess bore Bustanai sons (three, according to the Geniza version). Their brothers, sons of Bustanai's Jewish wife, questioned their Judaism and the sages of Sura decided (contrary to the law), in favour of the Persian's sons. On the other hand, the Arabic story from the Geniza precedes this by describing the annihilation and ruin that has befallen the household of the exilarch because he had struck his father-in-law, head of the yeshiva, and the pregnancy of the exilarch's wife, and the birth of Bustanai. Interwoven into this story is the head of the yeshiva's dream, in which he sees King David reprimanding him for cutting down the plants in his garden; and the appointment of an elder from among the Baghdad elite, to act as the exilarch's deputy until Bustanai comes of age; the elder's refusal to vacate the incumbency when the time came; their attendance before Caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb; Bustanai's courage in standing up for himself when appearing before the caliph, even when a mosquito bites him until he bled (and hence the seal of the exilarch includes a mosquito). From this point onward the Arabic story gives an account of the Persian princess, but here she is the bondswoman of the Persian king. It tells of her giving birth to sons while she remains a gentile, for Bustanai has neither freed nor converted her, and tells that there were no other sons apart from hers, and therefore all the exilarchs of Baghdad are forever defiled and are not the true heirs of the House of David. The 'untouched' heirs exist—it is told—in the Christian countries (referring perhaps to another branch of Mar Zūtrā's descendants, or another offspring of Kafnai, Bustanai's father). It seems that there is the lapse of a generation or two between the gaon's responsum (Sherira or Hayy) and the Arabic story

see Damīrī, 226-245, for a rich collection of traditions on the mosquito (the بعوضة), including a tradition on the wicked rulers of ancient Iraq, the *jabābira* (whom we cannot identify), who used mosquitoes as a means of torment and even as an instrument of murder; see *ibid.*, 226; and, on p. 229, the story of Nimrod (*namrūd*), which relates that a mosquito entered Nimrod's nose, reaching his brain and causing him to die after two days of torment. See the story of Mar Zūtrā in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 72f., 76; in *ibid.*, I, 178, there is a version according to which Mar Zūtrā was the son of Bustanai; it is worth noting that this version dates from 1043, i.e. two years after the copying of the Bustanai story from the Geniza; see also a Hebrew version of the Bustanai story, in which the name of the newborn appears as both Zūtrā and Bustanai (!), in Lewin's addition to Sherira, *Letter*, xix-xx, following *Yiḥūšē tannā ʿīm wa-amōrā ʿīm* of Judah b. Kalonymos, 129, which Lewin copied from a manuscript of the Friedberg community, now at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York; in that manuscript as well, the list of exilarchs includes "Zūtrā, whose name was Bustanai". See also Jawitz, *Töledot*, IX, 232f., who harshly criticizes the Mar Zūtrā story, as it describes R. Hanīna, the head of the yeshiva, as a wicked person, when in fact it is he who was the victim! And how was it possible that he did not know that his daughter was pregnant? And what does the badge of the exilarch have to do with the fly, given that it was not the fly which saved Mar Zūtrā? Accordingly, it is rather the *Maʿasē bēt dāvid* which is considered by him the more reliable source. Assaf, *Teg. ha-g.*, 29f., also believed that the Mar Zūtrā story was the earlier one, and deduced from those stories that, after Mar Zūtrā fled to Palestine, another branch of the exilarchic family, from which Bustanai was descended, stayed on in Babylonia. Tykocinski, *Devir*, I (1922/3), 171f., also believed that the Mar Zūtrā story predated the other, although he was not familiar with the opening passage of the Arabic Bustanai story, which contains the component parallel to the Mar Zūtrā story. See also the version of *Seder ʿolām zūṭā* printed by Schechter, *MGWJ*, 39 (1895), 28, from MS De Rossi 541, which gives the date 11 Kislev of the sabbatical year (*shemittā*) AM 4564: AD 804.

which was copied, as we have seen, in 1041; but it is possible, as mentioned above, that its development began considerably earlier.⁴⁹

(50) Thus the Arabic story in the Geniza cannot be considered a genuine historical source. It absorbed elements which actually belong to Mar Zūtrā, the exilarch who flourished during the Persian era (the beginning of the sixth century) which had become elements of Jewish folklore, adapting them to its slanderous intentions. In this story, Bustanai, like Mar Zūtrā, is in fact a decent man, who defended his rights before the ruler and merited the role of exilarch. His mistake, however, was that he did not properly convert the Persian bequeathed him by the caliph and therefore the exilarchs and the *nesī'im* who succeeded him, are all offspring of the Persian princess, could not be considered genuine descendants of King David, and even their Judaism is in doubt. Other later texts, like the Bustanai story, have no historical value. The section from Abraham ibn Da'ūd's *Sefer ha-qabbālā* was written in 1161, that is, 120 years after the version of the Arabic story was copied, and perhaps some 180 years after the gaon's responsum on which, to a large extent, Abraham ibn Da'ūd's description of the affair was based. Ibn Da'ūd knew the Arabic story, but in his words, "Bustanai converted her to Judaism and took her as his wife" as if by saying this, he put an end to all the rumors and slander. On the basis of his knowledge of the history of Islam as well as of Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, Abraham b. Da'ūd tried to fit the Bustanai affair into a historical framework. Unsuccessfully, however, as there is no historical validity in his reconstruction.

Further we have the responsum of Isaiah Di Trani, dating from the thirteenth century, but this, too, does not contribute any further information on the subject. We also have *Ma'asē bēt david*, the most famous and extensive source on Bustanai. It is known to modern scholars mainly for its version in the *Seder ha-dōrōt* of Heilprin, who was *dayyān* in Minsk. This volume was a huge success more than a century ago. According to the editor, in 1877, "after nine editions had been published containing many errors and confusion, a new edition has now been published with corrections and the proper sequence!" On comparing Heilprin's *Ma'asē bēt david* with earlier editions, one finds no errors in the earlier editions. The first printing of *Ma'asē bēt david* is from 5338, AD 1577/8, and was included by Isaac b. Abraham [°]Aqrīsh in his *Qōl mevassēr* which was printed in Constantinople. Referring to *Ma'asē bēt david*, [°]Aqrīsh says: "I found it in Damascus, written on vellum, including also a *massora*; it was written in the year 3887 (which should, of course, be 4887, i.e. AD 1127). We found inscribed there: this book was written by so-and-so and willed to so-and-so for ten generations". There is also a handwritten version copied by Joseph Harṭom (=Arṭom) which is identical in every way with the version printed by Isaac [°]Aqrīsh, except for the heading: *Ma'asē rabbi buṣṭanai* (!) copied by R.

⁴⁹ The similarity between the story regarding the head of the yeshiva and his son-in-law the exilarch, on one hand, and the affair of Saadia Gaon, on the other, is striking in the account of the latter which appears in Ibn Da'ūd, 41. Consider, e.g., the use of shoes: "If you do not validate (the deed), I will strike your head with a shoe". Obviously, Ibn Da'ūd made use of the version by Nathan the Babylonian, as well as of the Arabic Bustanai story, in which the exilarch strikes his father-in-law, the head of the yeshiva, with his shoe, see 2, a, lines 7-8.

Abraham Maimon in the holy language. We do not know who this Maimon was and it is reasonable to believe that it was copied from the version printed in *Qōl mevassēr*.⁵⁰

(51) One can surmise that what Isaac ʿAqrīsh discovered was the Bustanai story which we have today from the Geniza and was then either in the Arabic original or in a Hebrew translation. It seems that he had the version attributed to Nathan b. Abraham, as we have seen, rewritten into *Maʿasē bēt davīd*. He also inserted elements from the gaon's responsum and added some of his own wherever he considered it suitable. The Arabic of the original is generally well-disguised by ornate biblical phraseology. One expression, however, reveals that the author was familiar with the Arab sources: "the long hand" (of the exilarchs of the house of Bustanai); which is *ṭawīl al-bāʿ* used by the Muslim writers when speaking of the exilarchs, and I shall discuss this below in the chapter on the exilarchs.

The destruction visited on the family of the exilarchs came from the Persian king, and not by God's wrath over the blow which the exilarch rendered his father-in-law, head of the yeshiva. It is the king of Persia, not the head of the yeshiva who is being reprimanded by "the old ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance" (I. Sam. xvi:12), for "cutting down the trees in his garden"; and it is none other than King David who almost kills the king and only leaves him alone when he promises to mend his attitude towards the remaining heir. As in the Book of Daniel the person by whom the meaning of the dream is unraveled, is "one of the old sages", a relative of the kings of Judea, who was one of the prisoners. Again similar to what happens in the Book of Daniel (i: 5-16) the prisoners refuse to defile themselves by eating gentile food. The old man is the father of the wife of "one of the scions of the House of David" and 'the girl', the widow of the exilarch, is brought to the king's palace and Bustanai is born there. When he grows to manhood, he appears before the (Persian!) king, not because he is having differences with the old man who wanted to usurp him, but because the king wishes to see him after he was informed of Bustanai's brave behaviour when dealing with the fly (in the Arabic version, it is a mosquito). The king re-establishes the role of exilarch and Bustanai is once again given all the predominance and authority the exilarch had possessed in the past. In the meantime, "the king of the Ishmaelites arose". I believe that this phrase reveals the fact that the author of *Maʿasē bēt davīd* knew Ibn Da'ūd's *Sefer ha-qabbālā*, because it appears in one of his versions. We would expect that the story of the Persian woman would crop up at this point, but the author of this version delays the telling and precedes it with

⁵⁰ See Ibn Da'ūd, 34f.; Heilprin, *Seder ha-dōrōt*, 174f., which has an opening passage referring to the year AM 4420 (AD 660): "Rav Isaac was head of the yeshiva in Pumbedita", etc., after Ibn Da'ūd. *Qōl mevassēr* in Oxford whose shelf mark is Bodl Opp 8° 1098; *Maʿasē bēt davīd* appears there as well, on folios 59-63. Joseph Hartom's manuscript is also there: Bodl Opp Add 8° 59. See Neubauer, *Catalogue*, no. 2589; it was acquired from Joseph Hartom and Ephraim Yona of Trino. *Maʿasē bēt bustanai* (the word *bustanai* is written with the letter *ṣet* in the title, but is spelled with the letter *ṭaw* in the text) appears on folios 48-53. Isaac ʿAqrīsh was born around 1530 in Salonika, to a family of refugees from Spain; he wandered until he reached Egypt, where he was a close acquaintance of David b. Zimra and the teacher of his grandsons. On ʿAqrīsh, see: Yaari, *Meḥqerē sefer*, 235f. (The year of publication of *Qōl mevassēr* is listed in Ben-Yaacob, *Ōṣār*, as 5304 [AD 1544]; in reality, it was 5338 [AD 1578].)

information gleaned from Sherira Gaon's *Letter* about the meeting between ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib and R. Isaac and the Jews of Firūz-Shābūr. However, it is not R. Isaac who meets with ʿAlī, but Bustanai. From here onward, the teller of the story is obliged to refer the gift to ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, and not to ʿUmar, which is not in the gaon's responsum, nor is it in the Arabic story, or even in Ibn Daʿūd. He also knows that Bustanai was then thirty-five years old, thus adding to his age, assuming that a man who had succeeded in meeting the Persian king when he was still a young lad, and now with ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, would probably have grown to such an age. Despite his age, however, Bustanai had still not married, which surprised ʿAlī and motivated him to give Bustanai "king Dārā's daughter for a wife". Dārā is evidently the king's name and not that of the daughter and it seems that it was Dārā, as the famed Darius is called in Arab sources. Naturally, Bustanai had her immersed and made out a marriage contract in the proper fashion. Then follows an account of the appeal of Bustanai's sons, the *nesī'im*, i.e. of the Jewish wife, over the impropriety of the Persian's sons, taken from the Gaon's responsum but without any reference to the partiality which it ascribed to the Sura gaon. Actually the author of *Maʿasē bēt david* included all the basic elements of the two major ancient sources, apart from the "Jewish wars". He omits the dispute between the exilarch and the head of the yeshiva, as well as the elder's attempt to oust Bustanai from the exilarch's seat. The dispute between Bustanai's descendants among themselves takes on a matter-of-fact and practical aspect; being short, dry, and to the point, and as objective as an appeal and deed of the court. In short, as Grätz seems to have understood, *Maʿasē bēt david* was merely a literary work which had no historical information to fall back on, except the material taken from the gaon's responsum.⁵¹

4. *Bustanai and the caliph: Arab sources*

(52) We discover Bustanai's father, Kafnai, in one of the genealogical lists of the exilarchs below (sec. 76), and he is also called Kafnai in the Arabic story from the Geniza. Bustanai's Hebrew name was Ḥananiah, i.e. Ḥanīna (and Ḥanān in the Arab sources discussed below).

Before examining some Muslim sources related to our subject, I would like to make it clear that all the Jewish sources refer to Bustanai's meeting

⁵¹ There is a Hebrew version of the Bustanai story from the Geniza, in a manuscript published by Lewin in his addition to Sherira's *Letter*; xixf.; we do not know whether Isaac ʿAkrīsh made use of this version, of a similar one, or of the original Arabic text. On "the long hand", see Heilprin, *Seder ha-dōrōt*, 177. "The king of the Ishmaelites": Ibn Daʿūd, 34; this shall be discussed in greater detail below. The encounter with ʿAlī: Sherira, *Letter*, 101, and see the *variae lectiones* there. On Dārā, see e.g. Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Qasḍ*, 55; and the article Dārā in *El²* (Carra de Vaux, Massé). See Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 434; Baron, *SRHJ*, VI, 423, n. 60—without any basis for doing so—ascribes historical value to the mention of "a book of memoirs of the house of David", concluding that a book with this title did indeed exist and was kept by the exilarch, and that this alleged book contained genealogical lists of the exilarchs. Grossman, *Rāshūt*, 16, 38 n. 4, also ascribes to *Maʿasē bēt david* an importance similar to that of the Mar Zūrā story, assuming that it stems "probably from books of memoirs written in a rather early period, by a scribe of the Court of one of the exilarchs of the house of Bustanai".

with the Muslim ruler ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, except for *Maʿasē bēt davīd*, in which Bustanai's meeting is said to have been with ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, as it ascribed to Bustanai the encounter which is in Sherira Gaon's *Letter* related to R. Isaac. At any rate, it seems reasonable to assume that the possible historical core in these sources is the meeting between one of the exilarch's descendants and the second caliph, conqueror of the realm shortly after the Arab invasion of Babylonia. There is however no mention in the Arab sources of ʿUmar visiting Iraq or Persia. One could perhaps explain the difficulty and say that the meeting took place in his own domicile, Medina, or that the meeting was held with one of the superior Muslim army commanders who led the conquering forces, and not with the caliph himself. This possibility seems the most likely. As to ʿAlī, it is well-known that his caliphate was not recognized by the entire Muslim camp, a situation which led to a brutal civil war. Although the main area of his influence and power over parts of Babylonia, especially Kūfa, the military base set up by the conquerors on the banks of the Euphrates, was near the heart of the major Jewish districts of Nehardeʿa and Pumbedita. Hence the information in Sherira's *Letter* about the meeting between the Jews living in the area, led by R. Isaac, and ʿAlī, is entirely credible.⁵²

(53) ʿAlī's first visit to Kūfa took place in January, 657, and it was during this visit that he decided to make it his official residence and it became the headquarters for his supporters (in Sherira's *Letter*, the meeting took place in 657/8). According to Ṭabarī, a number of non-Muslims joined his camp, 800 *mawālī* and *mamālik*, apparently local clients of the Bedouin tribes. Thus there were two historical meetings between the Babylonian Jews and the Muslims: one between the exilarch and the Muslim ruler during the conquest, and another some twenty-five years later, between a wide Jewish public and ʿAlī. Here we return again to the matter of the Jews' attitude to the Muslim conquerors. It is certainly not surprising that Sherira Gaon never mentions any positive contacts between the Babylonian Jews and the conquerors throughout that entire generation preceding the encounter with ʿAlī in Fīrūz Shābūr. Indeed, there are a number of sources from

⁵² Kafnai, see 28, x, line 17; Jawitz, *Töledōt*, IX, 246f., assumed that Bustanai was the son of Ḥanīnai—who, however, was not himself an exilarch, so that Bustanai inherited the seat of Kafnai, who was his grandfather. Tykocinski, however, in *Devir*, I (1922/3), 176, correctly assumed that Ḥanīnai was actually Bustanai's other name (or real name); indeed, several sources, including the geonic responsum, explicitly write "Bustanai, namely Ḥanīnai". Baron, *SRHJ*, V, 141, ponders on the possibility that Hephzi-bah, mentioned in the Book of Zerubabel, was in fact Bustanai's mother; this, however, has no basis in the sources. Tykocinski, *ibid.*, 166f., believed he had found proof that the encounter was with ʿUmar, not with ʿAlī, given that the women of the Persian royal house were captured in 637 (after Qādisiyya), whereas ʿAlī became caliph only in 656. This, however, cannot constitute proof, since—as we shall see below—captures of such women occurred in a later period as well. From among the *variae lectiones* of Ibn Daʿūd's *Sefer ha-qabbālā*, it was formerly customary to prefer the one which indicated that "the king of the Arabs stood up (ʿ*md*) and gave Yazdigird's daughter to R. Bustanai", which allows the possibility of the caliph having been ʿAlī; this, however, does not at all fit the text, and indications are in favor of the reading "the king of the Arabs, ʿUmar" (ʿ*mr*)—the former obviously being a copyist's error; see *Sefer ha-qabbālā* (Cohen ed.), 34. Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 126f., 128f., rightly placed the encounter between the Jewish masses, headed by R. Isaac, and ʿAlī in the correct historical context. Neusner, *Hist.*, V, 130, disregarded the chronological discrepancy, of 25 years, and considered the encounter with ʿAlī as proof of the Jews' friendly attitude toward the Muslims at the time of the conquest.

which one can learn that the Jews did not actually welcome the conquerors with open arms, as we shall soon discover. A legendary Shiite source tells of Jews who turned into fish swimming in the Euphrates because they refused to accept the patronage of the Muslims. When ʿAlī Ibn Abī Tālib was in Kūfa, he was surrounded by Jews who asked him to deny this but he managed to prove this in practice when the fish themselves claimed it was true. Another source which to the best of my understanding refers to the onset of Muslim rule and contains a hint of the Jewish struggle against the Muslims and their Christian supporters, is a passage from an anonymous Syriac chronicle which tells of a Babylonian Jew ("from Bēt Aramayyē"), from a village called Pelugātā (evidently Pumbedita, "where the waters of the Euphrates part to irrigate the land", relates the chronicle). That Jew announced that the Messiah had come. He was joined by about four hundred men—spinners, weavers, and flax washers—who burnt down three churches, and killed the local ruler. Armed forces were sent from ʿAqūla (Kūfa) and punished them harshly.⁵³

(54) We can now turn to some Muslim sources in which the Jewish element has yet to be uncovered, in contrast to the above-mentioned material which is easily understood. Apart from other facets which help to define the personality and status of Bustanai, a better understanding of the situation can be gained from the aspect I have mentioned—that is, the Jews' opposition to the invasion of the Muslim tribes. Many Jews were immersed in an awakening of messianic hopes while ancient and powerful empires were declining in the face of an unexpected enemy which pounced on them without mercy. This can be sensed in the passage I quoted above from the Syriac chronicle in which events are reflected as if they were appearing in a distorting mirror. Hence it stands to reason that in the midst of this messianic awakening, there stood Bustanai, son of the exilarch and scion of the House of David.

We shall begin with the tradition in Ibn Saʿd, author of the great dictionary of personalities (died in 845); in the entry Khālīd b. al-Walīd, commander of the first great Arab invasion into Babylonia, Ibn Saʿd says: "and he (Khālīd) made a peace pact (*ṣulḥ*) with ṢALŪBĀ B. BUṢBUHRĀ, whose place was the banks of the Euphrates, for a tax of 1000 dirhams". Tabarī says that Khālīd concluded the *ṣulḥ* in the month of Ṣafar in the year 12 (May 633), with ṢALŪBĀ B. NASTŪNĀ (or NASTŪNA) b. BUṢBUHRĀ, which was valid with regard to Bāniqīya, Barūsmā, and Ullais, and also to

⁵³ ʿAlī's arrival in Kūfa: Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 3371; Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, 3; Dīnawarī, *Akh-bār*, 162: he arrived in Kūfa on Monday, 12 Rajab (4 January 657); Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, VII, 254; cf. Shaban, *Isl. Hist.*, 73; Muir, *The Caliphate*, 253; Shaban stresses the fact that the main force behind ʿAlī was composed of Arab settlers, and that these, in his opinion, constituted the *qurrā'* of the Muslim tradition—a word derived from *qarya*, village, and not from *qara'a*, i.e., the learned ones (the formerly accepted interpretation). The Shiite legend: Rāwandī, *Kharāj*, 135; the Syriac chronicle: Guidi, *Actes*, 8^e Congr. Or. (1891), II (3), 28f. = CSCO (Syri), I, 33; Nöldeke, *Syrische Chronik*, 36; Musil, *Middle Euphr.*, 280. The information contained in the Syriac text is certainly similar to that set forth in the story of Mar Zūtrā in *Seder ʿolām zūtā*. According to Sharf, *Byz. Jewry*, 62f., the Syriac source should have preserved the memory of a Jewish revolt in Babylonia in AD 645, which Sharf—as earlier suggested by Starr, *REJ*, 102 (1937), 84—assumes to have been led by a Samaritan (and therefore, Bēt Aramayyē should be identified with Bēt Shemer of the Pseudo-Dionysios chronicle; see Starr, *ibid.*).

the region between the FALĀLIJ (Pelugātā in the Syriac source above), as far as HURMUZJIRD, as well as relating to the population of the lower and middle BIHQUBĀDH. Ṭabarī also provides two versions of the peace agreement, worded in the form of a letter from the (Muslim) army, which contains mostly matters related to various taxes, in addition to Khusraw's *kharza*. This was Khālīd's first conquest after the surrender of the people of Hīra, who were themselves Bedouin. The tax (the *jizya*) should have been 10,000 dinars. A poll tax of four dirhams was levied on every head, and the remainder to complete the sum, was to be taken from people according to their ability to pay: that is, some more and some less. In Khālīd's letter which Ṭabarī quotes, there is also the official recognition of Ṣalūbā b. Naṣṭūnā's leadership, "because your people even earlier, recognized in you their leader and wanted you". The Muslims promise him patronage and protection. Ṭabarī says there in the continuation, that the name of Ṣalūbā's emissary was Ezekiel (Hizqīl in Arabic), and that he received two separate letters, one to the notables, and the other to the common people; the one written in the language of Hīra (evidently the Arabic dialect of the local tribes) and the other in *nabaṭī*, the language of the Nabateans (the early Muslim sources call the Aramaic-speaking peasants Nabateans). It should be noted that apart from the designation ṢALŪBĀ B. NAṢṬŪNĀ B. BUṢBUHRĀ, Ṭabarī has other versions: Ṣalūbā b. Buṣbuhrā, Naṣṭūnā (each separately). In Ṭabarī and in other sources we encounter the three basic forms of the name: ṢALŪBĀ, BUṢBUHRĀ, NAṢṬŪNĀ, in various combinations and with or without adding *ibn*. Ṭabarī repeats these things in different versions and places, for he was able to draw on information from the many texts on hand. Elsewhere he says: the only ones who had made a pact (*ʿiqd*) with the Muslims before the battle (the battle of Qādisiyya) were the Banū Ṣalūbā, who were the population of Hīra and Kalwādhā, and the villages in vicinity of the Euphrates. They broke the pact later on but as they had no alternative, they (finally) accepted the Muslims' patronage. Later on, when remonstrations were being made to ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb concerning the non-fulfilment of the agreements, the complainants put in a good word for the people of Bāniqiyya, B[arū]smā, and the people of 'far-off' Ullays.⁵⁴

(55) Balādhurī (who died in 892), who collected sources similar to those mentioned above, clearly refers to the armed resistance of the local inhabitants. After the battle, Khālīd sent Jarīr b. ʿAbdallāh al-Bijlī to the people of Bāniqiyya. Buṣbuhrā b. Ṣalūbā came out to meet him and asked his pardon for having fought the Muslims. There are those who say that Ibn Ṣalūbā came to request forgiveness from Khālīd himself and that Khālīd then concluded a *ṣulḥ* with him. Despite the garbled version, one can understand that this pact applied only to b. Ṣalūbā's country and to Hīra, but not to the lands beyond the mountains. Elsewhere, Balādhurī states that ʿUmar ibn al-

⁵⁴ Ibn Saʿd, VII (2), 121. The printed text has بصرى, which should be بصيرى, as in the other sources quoted below. Cf. Burāqī, 140; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2017, 2019-2020, 2049-2053, 2061, 2368-2369. In one place, بصرى is printed instead of بصيرى; elsewhere, بصرى appears instead of باروسا. As to the *kharza* (or *harza*) of Khusraw, this is nothing else than the *kargā* of the talmudic sources, which was the poll tax due to the Persian king. Cf. Caetani, *Annali*, II (2), 971, n. 4, who mentions in this connection the term *kharāj kisrā* in Ibn Khurdādhbih. Abū Yūsuf, 197, also uses *kharz* in the sense of *kharāj*.

Khaṭṭāb granted a payment of one thousand (dinars?) to KHĀLID and JAMĪL, the sons of BUŠBHURĀ, the *dihqān* (Jamīl is mentioned also by Jāhiz; *dihqān* was the way the Muslim sources referred to the local Persian rulers and estate owners) of al-Falālīj. The Arab sources speak of quite a number of similar instances of allowances and benefits given by the conquerors to the local leaders and notables in order to gain their support, among them members of the royal household, such as Firūz b. Yazdigird, who was said to be the *dihqān* of the Nahr al-malik canal, and who received a grant of 2000 dirhams.⁵⁵

(56) In a series of similar and detailed sources, Ṭabarī adds further information about the local ruler, named Jaban (جبان) in the printed text. I examined a number of handwritten copies of the Persian translation of Ṭabarī's chronicle (written by Abū 'Alī Muḥammad Bal'amī in about 960, that is, approximately one generation after Ṭabarī's demise in 932) and I found the versions حابر حابان Ḥābān there. Undoubtedly the original name, which was mistaken owing to a misplaced dot, a typical and frequent error in Arabic writing, was حنان Ḥānān, and not Jābān or Ḥābān or Ḥābār, that is, names that never existed. According to Ṭabarī, he was the ruler of Ullais and the first to display opposition to the invasion of the tribes. Al-Muthannā, head of the local tribes who served as the Muslim vanguard, overcame Ḥānān in the battle on Nahr Thamm, which has since been called the Nahr Damm (the canal of blood), owing to the many victims this battle claimed, including most of Ḥānān's best men. Afterwards, when the Persians had regained their strength, the Persian commander-in-chief, Rustam, appointed Ḥānān commander of the lower Bihqubādh district and he fought another battle against the invaders in Namāriq. Ḥānān was taken prisoner there but Abū 'Ubayd b. Mas'ūd al-Thaqafi, the Muslim commander, ordered Ḥānān's release—according to one tradition. Another tradition has it that Abū 'Ubayd decided that Ḥānān and Mardanshāh, the Persian commander, should be put to death for having broken the *dhimma* pact, i.e. the agreement marking the surrender and the acceptance of Muslim protection. We encounter Ḥānān again, this time together with Yazdigird, in the description of the events that took place afterwards. Ḥānān seems to have anticipated future events, that is, the fact that the Arabs would take over Persian rule. Balādhurī also refers briefly to Ḥānān's exploits, that is, to the incident of Nahr al-damm; according to him, Ḥānān and his men agreed to act as guides and assist the Muslims after the battle.

⁵⁵ Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 244f.; Caetani, *Annali*, II (2), 173. Caetani also points out the struggle of the indigenous population against the invaders. In the version given by Abū Yūsuf (died AD 798), *Kharāj*, 145, Khālid attacked Bāniqiyā, whose people asked for a *ṣulḥ* after having fought during an entire night, through the mediation of a *dihqān* from one of the villages in the *sawād* (= county) of Ṣalūbā. Khālid sent Jarīr b. 'Abdallāh to him, and Jarīr b. 'Abdallāh concluded a *ṣulḥ* with him, in exchange for the payment of *jizya*. The traditions in Abū Yūsuf are fragmentary, and the editor's hand is obvious; similarly fragmentary, and devoid of any value, are the details cited in the book by his contemporary, Yahyā b. Adam (died AD 818), 34-36. The allowances for Bušbuhrā's sons: Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 457; Jāhiz, *Uḥmāniyya*, 212. For more on various allowances, see: Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 176; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 484 (under Bāniqiyā), cites the story of the *ṣulḥ* with Bušbuhrā and mentions the land of Ibn Ṣalūbā, who was the ruler of Bāniqiyā and Sāmiyā, and the letter sent by Khālid b. al-Walīd to Ṣalūbā ibn Bušbuhrā.

Ibn Kathīr mentions Hānān in connection with the *ṣulḥ* of the people of Bāniqiyya and Bārūsmā, quoting Muḥammad ibn Ishāq (who died in 768), whose work has not been preserved. His version is also حابان and he too, according to his statements, was the ruler of the place but the *ṣulḥ* was made with Buṣbuhrā b. Ṣalūbā, and some say: Ṣalūbā b. Buṣbuhrā. The terms for making peace was a payment of 1000 dirhams, and some say: dinars (for every head), every year in the month of Rajab.⁵⁶

(57) As to Buṣbuhrā, we meet him again in the Battle of the Bridge, that is, the bridge of Quss al-nāṭif. Khālīd ibn al-Walīd and his units passed over into Palestinian territory shortly before this and the position of the Muslims in Babylonia and Persia declined. The Persians overcame them for a while, reorganizing their defense system along the Euphrates, and stationing their forces in Quss al-nāṭif on the western bank. The Arabs were stationed at Marwaḥa across the river. According to Ṭabarī, it was Ibn Ṣalūbā who held the bridge and enabled both sides, the Muslims and the Persians, to move freely from either side. Ṣalūbā b. Naṣṭūnā, according to Ṭabarī, is the name of the master of Quss al-nāṭif, while according to Balādhurī, the people from Bāniqiyya, that is, Ṣalūbā b. Naṣṭūnā's people, were not neutral and helped the Muslims to prepare the bridge for crossing, and indeed, they crossed the bridge in the month of Ramaḍān, in the year 13 (November 634).

A year and a half later (or two-and-a half; February-March 636 or 637), we find Buṣbuhrā retreating from the Muslims, while the latter were moving eastward from the Euphrates to Madā'in (that is, Māhōzē). It was said that he fought the Muslims in Birs, the large arm of the Euphrates which is today called Nahr Hindiyya. The battle came to a sorry end and he was obliged to withdraw to Babylon with the remnants of the Persian army, where, it was said, he died from the impact of a blow from the Muslim commander's lance.⁵⁷

(58) I shall now turn to the names mentioned in the sources I have examined, beginning with the geographic names. I have already mentioned above the name Falālīj, which is certainly Pumbedita, and something about Birs. Bāniqiyya is Tūlbanqā or Tūlbaqnā in the Babylonian Talmud, identified with Gishrā de-bē perāt, which is the bridge called Quss-al-nāṭif in the Arab sources. Ptolemy calls it Thelbenkane. This is in fact Tell bē neqīyu or Tell bē neqīyē ("house of the sheep"). Bāniqiyyā is situated on the western bank of the Euphrates, opposite Neharde'a. According to Balādhurī, it

⁵⁶ Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, I, 2018f., 2031-2035, 2165-2194, 2182f., 2203f.; see حابان in the manuscripts of Bal'āmī's Persian Ṭabarī translation, BL Add 26,174, f. 133b, line 1, top; Add 16,814, f. 206a, line 10, top; Add 7,622, f. 274, bottom, f. 276, line 18 from top. See Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 242, 253; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, VI, 343; Dhahabī, *Ta'riḥ*, II, 5, has under AH 13 a brief passage on Abū 'Ubayd's battle with Hānān. Hānān was captured, but managed to escape by means of a stratagem, in exchange for two of his slaves, while the Muslims were unaware of his identity and status; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, II, 384 (probably after Ṭabarī), describes the conquest of Bāniqiyyā, Bārūsmā and Ullays, and the *ṣulḥ* with Ibn Ṣalūbā, in exchange for an annual payment of 10,000 dinars(!), in addition to the *kharza* (see above) of Khusrāw. See *ibid.*, 392: the *ṣulḥ* was concluded with *SRY'*, Ṣalūbā b. Naṣṭūnā, and Naṣṭūnā.

⁵⁷ The Battle of the Bridge, Qādisiyya, Birs, Babylon: see Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, 2049, 2174-2178; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 521; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, II, 438, 506; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 81f.; cf. Caetani, *Annali*, III (1), 145ff.; in *ibid.* (2), 735, he makes of Buṣbuhrā "a Persian general", so also in his Index. On Birs, see Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 28 (1874), 93.

was situated in the vicinity of Kūfa. Yāqūt explains that the name is in *nabaṭī* (Aramaic): *neqīyē*. The Jews, he claims, bring their dead to be buried in this place because Abraham said that it was here that the resurrection of the dead will take place. In one of Hayy Gaon's responsa, he also says: "...when a prominent woman dies, her corpse is sent from Baghdad to Fīrūz Shābūr (which is Neharde'a) to the desert. There is certainly no prohibition in the matter"; Obermeyer commented that what was meant by the gaon's responsum was the area opposite Neharde'a to the west of the Euphrates, i.e. Bāniqīyā.

As to Bihqubādh (The 'house', i.e. the district of Qubād), named after the Persian king, this was the region of southern Babylonia in which Sura was also located. The eastern canal of the Euphrates, known as Nahr Sura, irrigated the three districts of this area: Sura, Birbīsmā, Bārūsmā, (mentioned in the traditions cited above related to the battles). Both Bāniqīyā and Bihqubādh were centers of Jewish settlement and represent in these traditions the two districts: Neharde'a-Pumbedita and Sura. We also encountered Kalwādhā in these same traditions, which was at the center of the area populated by Jews to the east of the Euphrates, in the land of Rādhān, which in Jewish sources is Gūkhā. Thus we see that the local leader mentioned in the sources I have surveyed, hovered over the three major areas inhabited by the Babylonian Jews.⁵⁸

(59) Now we turn to the three names, Šalūbā, Buṣbuhṛā, Naštūna. Šalūbā is a Syriac-Aramaic word, as one notes from its pattern. Šālōvā (*nomen opificum*, in talmudic Hebrew and Aramaic) means: the crucifier. It suffices to study Christian-Syriac literature wherever it mentions Jews in a polemical context (indeed this is almost always the case), in order to note that this was the way the Jews were commonly styled: "murderers of God" or 'crucifier' or "son of crucifier". This was not an unintentional or isolated image but an integral part of everyday usage. Taking, for instance, the terrible affair of the young Christian, who was caught and employed to do hard labor by a Jew from Mātā Maḥsiyya (i.e. Sura): *aḥdēh ḥad min benē šālōvē wa-a'lēh le-vēteh*. In the Syriac account of the events in Ḥimyar, *ketāvā de-ḥimyarē*, we encounter the term *šālōvā* whenever the author wants to stress the wickedness of Masrūq (who is Yūsuf dhū Nu'ās, the

⁵⁸ See Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IV A, 147; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 483; Burāqī, 139f.; Bakrī, *Mufjam*, 222f., where Bāniqīyā is described as "a territory in (the district of) Najaf, behind Kūfa". According to Bakrī, Abraham and Lūt passed through Bāniqīyā on their way to Palestine; Abraham bought land there, in exchange for sheep, "and sheep are called in *Nabaṭī*: *niqīyē*. Abraham said that from this place 70,000 of his offspring would be resurrected, and because of this tradition, Jews carry their dead to Bāniqīyā". Al-Razzāz, 109, adds that "the Jews, God's enemies, claim that 70,000 of them will go directly into Paradise, from behind Kūfa, while nobody counts them". On the responsum of Hayy Gaon: Ibn Ghayyāth, *Sha'arē simḥā*, II, 73f.; *Ōṣar ha-g. to Mashqūn*, no. 140 (p. 50); cf. Obermeyer, 94f., 323; Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 436. Some two or three generations after the Arab conquest, Caliph 'Abd al-Malik settled an Arab tribe, B. 'Anza, in Bāniqīyā; see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 893. (B. 'Anza, a branch of the B. Asad, are mentioned as living in Baṣra as late as the eleventh century AD; see Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamhara*, 293.) On Bihqubādh and southern Babylonia, see Le Strange, *Lands*, 70; on Kalwādhā and Rādhān, see section 354 below. As to Ullays, Nöldeke endeavored to prove that it was Vologesias, in the vicinity of Ḥīra, east of the Euphrates: *ZDMG*, 28 (1874), 93ff.

Jewish king) as well as that of the Jews towards the Christians in Najrān. And one could cite many more examples.⁵⁹

(60) Thus we may conclude that the Muslim writers to whom I referred above, derived their information from a Syriac text, probably a chronicle with a chapter on the conquest, which adopted an anti-Jewish bias. As we shall find later on, the leader of the Jews, son of the exilarch, was regularly referred to as "son of the crucifier" and at times, the Jews in their entirety were called "sons of the crucifier". In what I shall discuss below with reference to the "son of the crucifier" in the biography of the Prophet, it will be understood that while referring to the Prophet's day, a chapter of that Syriac chronicle, or of a similar one, was used. Regretfully, I cannot pinpoint the channels through which these ideas reached the Muslim writers. It is well-known that the books which have been preserved, that is, works of Ibn Sa'd, Ṭabarī, Balādhurī, etc., are in fact compilations taken from writers who preceded them. One of the primary sources of information of the best informed among them, that is, Ṭabarī, is Lūṭ b. Yahyā Abū Mikhnaḥ, one of the first anthologists of the Islamic traditions, who died in 774. He wrote 32 monographs on various chapters in the annals of Islam, most of them about Iraq. Ibn Sa'd's source was Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab, who died in ca. 718, and who was one of the most learned people in Medina. Another of the important luminaries of Medina was Šālīḥ b. Kaysān, in the next generation, who also served as a source for Ṭabarī and others. He died in ca. 760. It seems that the nearest we come to the subject of our discourse, and also, perhaps, to the Syriac sources, was Māhān, who hailed from Kūfa, and was one of the rebels against the Umayyads who was sentenced to death in 702. In the following generation: Sa'īd ibn al-Marzubān (that is, the son or grandson of the Persian governor) who also stemmed from Kūfa, and who died in ca. 750 AD.⁶⁰

(61) There is no certainty with regard to the spelling of Buṣbuhrā or its vocalization. Buṣbuhrā, like Šalūbā, is not an Arab name. The *P* in Persian words, as in any other non-Arab language, becomes in Arabic either a *B* or an *F*. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the original name was Puspuphra (the *šād* and the *sīn* often replace one another in Arabic). The first part *bus* (*pūs* in Persian) means 'son'. *BUHR* (and also *FUHR*) is explained by medieval Arabic lexicographers as "the synagogue of the Jews". According to them it is a Persian word which came into Arabic from Aramaic (*nabaṭ*), though some say it is a Hebrew word. The Christians (i.e. Syriac-Aramaic speakers) say *fuhr*. The Persian dictionaries concur with the Arabs on this. It thus appears that *fuhr* and in Christian Aramaic *puḥrā* is the Jew-

⁵⁹ See the anonymous Syriac chronicle: Guidi, *CSCO* (Syri), I, 32; Nöldeke, *Syrische Chronik*, 35; cf. Moberg, *The Book of the Himyarites*, in the Syriac text, 6, line 3; 31, line 20, and more places *ibid.*; Zingerle, *Monumenta Syriaca*, 94; Ephrem the Syrian, *Opera omnia*, 511C. Moberg, *ibid.*, 22a, makes use of the term *zāqōṣā*, which also means 'the crucifier'; this term also appears in Ephrem the Syrian, *CSCO* (Syri), XCII, 72; and in the laws of the *katholikos*: Yīshū' barnūn, in the *Syriac Law Books* (Sachau), II, 170. Horowitz, *Kor. Unters.*, 162, in his discussion on Ibn Hishām, 351, already noted that the term *šalūbā* stems from Syriac, meaning 'the crucifier', but did not conclude anything with regard to this topic.

⁶⁰ Abū Mikhnaḥ: see the article Abū Mikhnaḥ in *EL*² (by Gibb); Duri, *Hist. of the ME*, 49, mentioned that he made use of traditions from al-Shām (Syria, Palestine). Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyab: Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 84f.; cf. Rosenthal, *Hist. of Musl. Historiogr.*, 292. Māhān: Ibn Ḥajar, *ibid.*, X, 11f.; Sa'īd ibn al-Marzubān: *ibid.*, IV, 84f.

ish congregation. We can therefore presume that the Aramaic-speaking Christians called the Jewish exilarch *puḥrai*, which the Persians borrowed, accounting for the word *puspuḥrai* or *puspuḥrai*, which evidently meant "son of the exilarch", or "the junior exilarch", like Mar Zūtrā in Aramaic (see above, sec. 51). The word *puḥrā* has not survived in Syriac sources, as far as I can ascertain. Nor does it figure in Jewish Aramaic either, but it seems that Rav Puḥrā (head of the community?) in *Seder ʿōlām zūṭā* belongs here (above, sec. 43).

This leaves us with Naṣṭūnā, who is obviously none other than Bustanai. The exchange of a *nūn* for a *bā'* is a common occurrence in Arabic manuscripts, for the difference between them is a matter of the placing of the diacritical point, which not infrequently was left out altogether and left to the imagination of the next copyist. As to the replacement of *tā'* with *ṭā'* this is also a frequent phenomenon in words and names from the Persian surroundings. From which we learn that the Syriac original from which it was copied, was apparently referring to Ben Šālōvā Bustanai, who was *puspuḥrai*; meaning: son of the crucifier (= a crucifier, i.e. a Jew) Bustanai, son of the exilarch. And in the Arab sources: Ibn Šalūbā, Naṣṭūnā, Buṣbuḥrā.⁶¹

(62) Evidently, "the son of the exilarch" was considered a personality of some importance in the ancient Muslim world. *Ibn ra's al-jālūt* travels around Medina together with Muṣ'ab ibn al-Zubayr, one of two brothers, sons of al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām, the Prophet's uncle on his mother's side (they were the brothers who fought against the Umayyads over the leadership of Islam towards the end of the seventh century). He sees the cemetery of Medina and immediately identifies it as the place described in "the book of God" (i.e. the Qur'ān) where the resurrection of the dead will begin. Seventy thousand will arise from the dead (see above, sec. 58, the tradition about Bāniqiyya; the Jews are familiar with these matters).

To our astonishment, we also find Bustanai in Medina in the Prophet's time. Bustanai the Jew (in another version: Bustānā) asks the Prophet what were the names of the stars which Joseph saw in his dream, and the Prophet tells him what they were called. To complete the picture—Ibn Šalūbā is also present in Medina in the Prophet's day. Ibn Ishāq considered him one

⁶¹ *Pus*: see Vullers, *Lex.*, I, 359 (where it is mentioned as an abbreviation of *pusar*). Nyberg, *Manual*, 163. *Fuhr*: see Ibn Durayd, II, 404; Jawharī, *Šihāḥ*, s.v. *فهر*; Nawawī, *Tahdhīb*, III, 75; Firūzābādī, II, 112; *Lisān al-ʿarab*, V, 66; Ibn al-Athīr, *Nihāya*, III, 220; *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, III, 477. See also Lane, *Lex.*, VI, 2453. In several places, those lexicographers cite a sentence from ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib: "as if they were Jews going out from their *fuhr*". See also Vullers, *Lex.*, I, 385: *gymnasium Judaeorum*; M. Maʿīn, *Burhān qāṭʿ*, I, 430. The root, of course, is Semitic, not Persian; cf. Ugaritic *pkhr*, Akkadian *pukhru*, meaning 'convention', 'assembly', 'congregation'. See the matter of Fihrawayh, who flourished in the ninth century AD; he was one of the forefathers of ʿUbaydallah b. Muḥammad, known as Ibn Jaghūma (see section 183 below). As to the reading *puḥrā* (not *puḥdā*), this is also the version in *Seder ʿōlām zūṭā*, in Zakuto's *Yūḥasin*, 93. On the interchange of *t* and *ṭ*, see Vullers, *Lex.*, II, 525. See Marzubānī, 138: the poet al-Aṣmaʿī, while a guest of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, was asked about the word *taṣṣhīl*, which means a pie of wheat grains. He explained that *taṣṣhīl* was a Hebrew word (i.e. *taṣṣhīl*, "a cooked dish"); see *ibid.* for more examples of the shift *t > ṭ*. Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 116, in a brief and confused account of the conquest of the Persian kingdom, mentions the name Busfurūkh, the Marzubān who was in command of al-Anbār (Nehardeʿa) during the battle with the Arabs under al-Muthannā. This is apparently also a garbled version of *puspuḥrai*; cf. Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 679, where the version is *مفروخ*.

of the Jewish leaders who opposed the Prophet's ideas and denied the Prophet's assumption of the role of God's messenger. He was also given to debate with him. These incidents took place shortly after the *hijra*, after the building of the mosque, the writing of the "constitution of the *umma*" and the establishment of fraternal ties between the *anṣār* and *muhājirūn*. Hence, it seems that Ibn Ṣalūbā, Bustanai, son of the exilarch, was in Medina in ca. 623. The presence of the son of the exilarch may perhaps be linked to the fact that the status of the city of Medina was one of subordination to the Persians. I have brought this up as also mentioned in the traditions describing the Jews as tax collectors for the Persians (above, sec. 2). One must remember that the Persians were at the peak of their power in 623, after they had rendered a tremendous blow to the Byzantines, conquering Syria, Palestine and Egypt.⁶²

(63) In summarizing the major details we have gathered about Bustanai, we can assume that he succeeded his father Kafnai, who was evidently killed in the course of the assaults connected with the suppression of the revolt of Bahrām Chubīn, that is, in approximately AD 590. He became known to the Jewish world, as well as to the non-Jewish countries, as the "son of the exilarch", that is Puspuhrai. His Hebrew name was Hānān, that is Hānaniah, as it also figured in the gaon's responsum and in the lists of the exilarchs. In the hostile Christian Syriac literature he was called "son of the crucifier", or 'the crucifier'. The identification of Hānān with Ibn Ṣalūbā Buṣbuhrā seems to be apparent from the fact that the Arab sources describe both as being rulers in the very same area at the same time. It is quite possible that in ca. 623, he was indeed in Medina, as the Arab sources stated. Ten years later, he was fighting the invading Muslim tribes. After

⁶² The son of the exilarch: Ibn al-Najjār, 402; copied by Samhūdī, II, 72. See also 'Abbāsī, 151. Muṣ'ab, at the time of the rebellion, was governor of Medina, appointed by his brother 'Abdallāh; see Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 250. He performed the pilgrimage in AH 71 (AD 691); see Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, IV, 406. See Jāhiz, *Bayān*, II, 189: the Muslims of the B. Thaḳīf consulted Jamīl b. Buṣbuhrā (i.e. the son of the exilarch, as explained above) regarding the proper place for construction of their lodgings, in the initial stages of the building of Kūfa, and he indicated to them the place between the Euphrates and the *dār al-imāra* ("the governor's house"). The matter of the stars: Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XV, 555; Zamakhsharī, *Kashshāf*, II, 302; Abū'l-Fidā', *Tafsīr*, II, 468; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, I, 199; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mawḍū'āt*, I, 145; Qurṭubī, *Jāmi'*, IX, 121; Baydāwī, *Anwār*, I, 240; Shawkānī, III, 6; al-Nawawī al-Jāwī, I, 398; Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 10 (1898), 108, cites a similar tradition, from Suyūfī, where the Prophet's encounter is with an unnamed Jew. The names of these stars are cited in a number of sources, e.g.: al-Naysābūrī al-Qummī, *Gharā'ib*, in the margin of Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, XII, 96:

جریان، الطارق، قابس، عمودان، الفلق، المصباح، الضروح، الفرع، وتاب، ذو النکین

Only a few of these names are explained by Kunitzsch, *Untersuchungen*, 42, 61: جریان (instead of جدیان), the two kids; عمودان, the two pillars—a synonym for حجاران, the two donkeys: Alpha and Beta Centauri. All of these traditions are ascribed to Jābir b. 'Abdallāh of Medina, of the B. Khazraj (of the B. Ghanm), who was a contemporary of the Prophet, and whose traditions became extremely popular, principally among the Shiites. On Jābir b. 'Abdallāh, see: Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd*, I, 256; al-Kashshī al-Tūsī, *Rijāl*, 42-45; Shiblī, MS BL Or 1570 (Cat. Rieu, 394), folios 11b-12a: he was first among the *anṣār* to adopt Islam, even before the 'Aqaba meeting. See also a story about داود the daودي in Ibn Hishām, 351, 379, 396, 399; in Dahlān, I, 393. The tax: Ibn Khurdādhbih, 128; Samhūdī, II, 269 (copied from the previous two and from al-Aqshahrī [died AD 1338], the author of a history of Medina); cf. Kister, *Arabica*, 15 (1968), 146f.

the collapse of the first round of fighting, an agreement was signed by him with the Muslims. In this agreement he represented the Jewish community of Babylonia. The Muslims granted him the recognition of his status as well as an annual subvention. At around more or less the same time, it seems that they gave him one of the daughters of the Persian royal household who had been taken prisoner. In the Battle of the Bridge, he wavered, and it is not clear whether he supported the Muslims or opposed them. According to one Arab source, he went over entirely to the Persians' camp, fought in the rearguard action after Qādisiyya, near the Euphrates, and was killed in the city of Babylon in AD 638. If all this is true, the children born to the Persian were still small when he died. Among the factors that point to his hostility towards the Muslims, one could name his loyalty to the Persian kingdom, where the position of the Jews was generally comfortable, as was the situation of the exilarch; his hatred of the invading nomadic tribes, which plundered and destroyed the more cultured areas they encountered, at least in the early stages of the conquest; the heavy burden of taxes imposed by the conquerors, added to the taxes demanded by the Persian king; the hostility and hatred between the Jews and the Christians; and the messianic hopes, which undoubtedly enflamed the spirit of many Jews in Babylonia and Persia.⁶³

5. *The affair of the Persian princess*

(64) We have noted Balādhurī's reference to the money granted by the Muslims to the sons of Buṣbuhrā, ruler of al-Falālīj: Khālīd and Jamīl; if I am indeed correct in my assumption that this ruler was none other than Bustanai and that Falālīj was Pumbedita, Jamīl seems to be the translation

⁶³ The matter of relations between Jews and Christians is reflected in the Syriac text on the Jewish upheaval, cited above (section 53), as are the Jewish messianic expectations. As for the Christians, it is true that the accounts of the conquest include many explicit mentions of murder and acts of cruelty perpetrated by the conquerors. See e.g. the details on Yishū'ihab II, who was *katholikos* starting in AD 628, and who was forced to flee before the Muslims, in Ortiz de Urbina, *Patrologia*, 132. On the other hand, it is known that the Muslims endeavored to attract the Nestorians of the Persian kingdom, as shown by the deed of rights which Caliph 'Umar granted to the *katholikos* Yishū'ihab, who maintained relations with the Arabs before they invaded the Persian territory. According to that source, 'Umar even exempted the Nestorians from the poll tax. See al-Sam'ānī, III (1), 8; III (2), 95, where he cites the Arabic chronicle of 'Amr ibn Mattā ibn Bahrām, *kitāb al-majdal* (mid-fourteenth century AD; see Graf, *GCAL*, II, 216). See also the letter from the *katholikos* Yishū'ihab to Simon, bishop of Revārdashūr, from a manuscript, in Fattal, *Le statut*, 181; Yishū'ihab points out that the Arabs do not harm the Christians; on the contrary, they protect them, their priests and their holy places, and contribute to the churches and monasteries; see also *ibid.*, 219; and see a version of this letter published by Fiey, *Orientalia Christiana periodica*, 36 (1970), 30, and *ibid.*, 30ff., for more of Yishū'ihab's statements, attesting to the prosperity of the Church in his day, one generation after the conquest, and additional facts in support of the sympathy and friendship between Muslims and Nestorians. Khālīd ibn al-Walīd appointed the Christian 'Abdallah b. Waythama as governor of the Falālīj region (i.e. the region of Pumbedita) and made him responsible for security and tax collection; see Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 2051f. It may be presumed that the Syriac sources from which the early Arab chroniclers drew their information was intended to show the loyalty of the Nestorians, while portraying the Jews in a hostile and tendentious manner, and especially "the son of the crucifiers", Bustanai-Hanan, who disputed with the Prophet during the first Medina period, and later headed the local defense against the Muslims.

of Hisdai, while Khālid would be Baradai. These are the names of Bustanai's sons from his Jewish wife (according to the gaon's responsum) and we have seen (sec. 55) that Jamīl is mentioned by Jāhīz as well. We have also seen that the first agreement made by the Muslims with the local people included a clause which recognizes the authority of the leader, who was Bustanai, according to my interpretation. As to another aspect found in the Jewish sources about Bustanai, that is, about the captive from the Persian royal family: Persian women prisoners from the royal household, even entire families from the royal household who were taken prisoner, are frequently mentioned in the Muslim sources. We do not have, to the best of my knowledge, any basis on which to determine when men, women, or children from the Persian royal family were first taken prisoner, but it is not altogether unlikely that such things were already happening at the onset of the conquest. The daughters of Khusraw were apparently taken captive at the beginning of the campaign, a fact which is hinted at in the chronicle of Bar Hebraeus, who adds that these daughters informed 'Umar of the rebellion of Shahrbarāz, who was the commander of the Persian army, together with his son, and 'Umar ordered them to be put to death.

A question which preoccupied the scholars was: do the traditions speak of Khusraw's daughter or of Yazdigird's? Ibn Da'ūd's version in his *Sefer ha-qabbālā*, in which he speaks of Yazdigird's daughter, differs from the gaon's version in his responsum printed in *Sha'arē Sedeq*: "the slave (of Bustanai) daughter of KNSRY (!), king of Persia". The Geniza version of this responsum solves the contradiction: "from the household of Khusraw, king of Persia". Ibn Da'ūd's version "the daughter of Yazdigird" is based on Ibn Da'ūd's knowledge of history, for the last of the Persian kings was called Yazdigird. One should also bear in mind that KSRY (as the name Khusraw is written), pronounced Kisrā in Arabic, refers not only to a specific Persian king but to every Persian king, like the general meaning associated with Caesar.

The version in the Geniza tells us the name of the princess, Izdādwar, and says that she was the daughter of Bīrān (should be: Būrān). Būrān (in Persian: Pūrān) was Khusraw II's daughter who succeeded him to the throne, for a period of a year and a half, until she died in the autumn of AD 631 (she was evidently assassinated). Izdādwar seems to be a proper Persian name although we do not come across it in any other known source.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Grossman, *Rāshūt*, n. 19, assumes that the capture could not have taken place before 638; there is, however, no proof of this. Bar Hebraeus is cited (in a fragmentary manner) by Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 433, copying from al-Sam'ānī, III (1), 442. See the complete version in MS Bodl Hunt 52, in the photocopy edition of Budge, fol. 36b, ll. 15ff., and see his translation, II, 94. The capture of Khusraw's daughters is also mentioned in a Byzantine text, probably written at the beginning of the fifteenth century AD, printed by Klein-Franke, *BZ*, 65 (1972), 5 (line 23 of the original). See Baron, *SRHJ*, V, 8, who is inclined to accept the *Ma'asē bēt dāvid* version of the princess' name, Dārā. See also *ibid.*, III, 270. The Persian translation of Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, by Bal'amī, III, 369, has Pūrān Dukht for Būrān; the sources with regard to her are full of contradictions, and a more precise survey of these sources would be welcome. According to a tradition in Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2169, 2172, she was still the queen of Persia at the beginning of the Arab invasions, i.e. in the spring of 633! See also Balādhuri, *Futūh*, 253; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, II, 233: after Khusraw was killed by his daughter, Arazmīdukht, the throne was inherited by her sister, Būrān. The name Būrān (or Pūrān) was common among Persians even in later generations: Caliph Ma'mūn, in Sha'ban 209 (December 824), married "Khadija b. al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, who was (also) called Būrān". See Mas-

(65) As mentioned above, we learn from the Muslim sources of a number of daughters of the Persian royal house who were captured. One of Yazdigird's daughters was given to the son of 'Alī Ibn Abī Tālib, Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn's small son, 'Alī al-Aṣghar (the little one), who was known as Zayn al-'Ābidīn (something like: "the splendor of the pious"), was the son of Yazdigird's daughter, a lineage which added considerably to his prestige as well as support from the Persian population of the caliphate. According to Ya'qūbī, his mother was Ḥarār, daughter of Yazdigird. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb gave her to Ḥusayn and she was granted the Arabic name Ghazāla. And there are those who say, the source adds, that her name was Shāh Zanān. In Ṭabarī, her name is Jīdā, or Hīdān.⁶⁵

(66) During the period of 'Uthmān's caliphate (644-656), a peace pact was effected between 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir b. Khurayz, governor of Baṣra, and the people of Abarshahr, from whom he received two girls from Khus-

'ūdī, *ibid.*, VII, 65. According to Dīnawarī, 111, and Tha'ālībī, *Ghurur*, 736, she ruled for eight months, and then took ill and died; on the other hand, Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 117, and his tables on Persian kings on pp. 121ff., have Pūrān on the throne for a year and four months and show her as being followed by Yazdigird, in 943 Sel., i.e. 632 (تاریخ الاسکنر). Theophanes, I, 329 states that she ruled for seven months, and so also in the Latin version of Anastasius, *ibid.*, II, 205. Nöldeke, *Aufsätze*, 129, writes that she ruled from June 630 to the autumn of 631; he assumes that she was the one who signed the peace treaty with Byzantium. See also *idem*, *Gesch.*, 390f., 433. Paruck, *Sas. Coins*, has on p. 1 a genealogical chart of the Sasanids; listed among the children of Khusraw III are Shahriyār, Mardanshāh, Gurānshāh (all these are also names of Bustanai's sons by his Persian princess-wife; this is somewhat of an enigma), and their sister Būrān, who—in his opinion—ruled from 17 June 629 to May 630; *ibid.*, 117, he also thinks that she was the one who signed the accord with the Byzantines. Cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*, 409. According to Grätz, *Gesch.*,⁴ V, 933, Ibn Da'ūd's comment to the effect that the princess was Yazdigird's daughter is unreliable, since he was very young when he was proclaimed king. (Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, VII, 30, gives his age as 21 years; Dīnawarī, 119, as 16 years.) However, those Arab sources which list the names of the five children of Yazdigird state that he was 35 years old at the time of his murder; apparently, then, the geonic responsum from the Geniza, which states that the princess was the daughter of Būrān, is to be trusted. The names of Yazdigird's children differ from one Arab source to the other. See Christensen, *ibid.*, 508, n. 6; Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, II, 241; Maqdisī, *Bad'*, V, 197. With regard to the Persian princess' name, see: Schechter, *Saadyana*, 75, n. 3, who cites a letter from Nöldeke in this matter, assuming that Izdādwar was a corruption of Izdūndād (an assumption adopted by other scholars as well). This name is listed (as a man's name) in Justi, *Namenbuch*, 146.

⁶⁵ The reader will look in vain for these names—as well as others mentioned below—among those listed in the previous note. See Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 363; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 2331; *idem*, *Dalā'il*, 81f.; al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, I, 468: her name was Salāma; on p. 467, he cites a Persian dictum spoken by her to 'Umar, whose meaning was probably "the light of Hurmuz faded out". Other versions of her name: Jihānshāh, Shahrbanūya. Ibn Shahrāshūb, III, 208, following Ibn al-Kalbī, states that the one who sent her to 'Alī was Hurayth b. Jābir, whom he had appointed to rule the entire East; he also gives additional versions of her name—Salāfa, Khawla; and some say: Bara, daughter of al-Nūshjān (i.e. not of Yazdigird!); some say that 'Alī called her Maryam, and others Fātima; the Persian version of the story states that 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn was the son of Shahrbanūya, daughter of Yazdigird, and Ḥusayn b. 'Alī; see Ibn al-Balkhī, 4. In addition to these opinions, Naysābūrī, *Rawda*, 201, cites the view that she was the daughter, not of Yazdigird, but of Shīrawayh, son of Khusraw II (i.e. Qubād II); he recounts that two daughters of Yazdigird were captured, of whom the other one was given to Muḥammad, the son of Abū Bakr. Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh*, IV, 38, tells that after Ḥusayn's murder, she was married to Zubayd, the *mawlā* (freedman, or protected man) of Ḥusayn. See also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Sifa*, II, 52; Rifā'i, *Siḥāh*, 42, who has an additional version of her name: Shāhrabāq. Ibn Tūlūn, *al-A'imma*, 75f., states that three (!) daughters of Yazdigird were captured; one, called Salma, was given to Ḥusayn, and another to 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb.

raw's family: Bābunj and Tahmīj (or: Tamhīj). There is another version which says that they were caught in Sarakhs, after °Abdallah b. Khāzim, the envoy of the above-mentioned °Abdallah ibn °Āmir, conquered that city. He gave one of them to the *nūshjān* (a Persian official, whose identity is not clear), while Bābunj, the other girl, died in AD 652.⁶⁶

(67) Additional information concerning the daughters of the Persian royal family belongs to the period of the civil war carried on among the Muslims themselves. After the battle of Šiffin (659) Khālīd b. Qurra was sent to Naysābūr, to suppress the rebellion of the local population. He managed to appease the people of the area by contracting a peace agreement (*ṣulḥ*) with them, and succeeded in catching two of the Persian king's daughters whose safety was guaranteed by the Muslims. He sent them to °Alī, who proposed that they turn to Islam and that he would then marry them off to Muslims. They were only willing to wed his sons but °Alī refused to accept this idea and bestowed them as a gift to the local *dihqān*, who in turn sent them to Khurāsān. Another daughter of the Persian royal family was under the protection of the caliph al-Walīd b. °Abd al-Malik and was the mother of the caliph Yazīd II b. al-Walīd. Her name was Shāhfārand according to Ya°qūbī, and she was the daughter of Fīrūz b. Khusraw. Ṭabarī claims that her name was Shāh Aafrīd and that she was Fīrūz b. Yazdigird's daughter. Yazīd boasted of the fact that he was the offspring of four kings: Khusraw, Marwān, the Byzantine emperor, and the Turkish *khāqān* (through his mother), and he repeated this in a rhyme which was frequently copied. According to another source, the Persian princess was actually Yazdigird's daughter, but this does not seem likely, for her son Yazīd was born in 700 or 708 (there is conflicting information about this), whereas Yazdigird was killed in 651, according to which she would have been more than fifty years old when he was born.

We have yet to discuss the information related to Bustanai's offspring and to the struggles hinted at in the sources, which took place within the institutions of Babylonian Jewish leadership during the first generations of Muslim rule, especially those which centered round the position of the exi-

⁶⁶ Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2887. °Abdallah b. °Āmir b. Kurayz, governor of Baṣra from AD 649/50, was the caliph's cousin on his mother's side; see the article on him in *EL*² (by Gibb). As to the Nūshjān who was given one of Khusraw's daughters: the version reading Nūshjān is not certain, although it is the most widely accepted. The name appears as Nuḥārjān in Dīnawarī, 123; a similar version, without diacritical marks, is given in Jāhiz, *Uṭhmāniyya*, 212; and there are others. The uncertainty about its meaning is illustrated by the fact that Ibn Khalīkān, V, 243, assumes that it might have been a city in Persia, "but God knows better". It could well have been a garbled form of an additional Persian appellation of the exilarch; this, however, cannot be proven for the time being. If any proof for this assumption is found, it might constitute a full parallel to the Bustanai story. Some describe the Nūshjān as the holder of a leading position in the Persian kingdom, a position which continued to exist under the Muslims. He was visited by Muslim notables in his house; see Marzubānī, 124; Iṣbahānī, *Āghānī*, III, 130. It might also have been an appellation used for the sons of rulers and notables in Persia; there is a mention of Anūshjān b. al-Harbadh (Harbadh being the appellation of a high official in Persia); see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2023, 2025 (the battles of the years AD 633-635); his death in battle is mentioned in *ibid.*, 2027, where he is referred to as *al-anūshjān*, i.e. with the definite article, which appears to be the correct form—that is, not as a proper name, but as a title denoting a function or status; see also *ibid.*, 2245; he is also called the son of the *harbadh*, *ibid.*, 2346; he is referred to as al-Nūshjān on p. 2887. Cf. Justi, *Namenbuch*, 429; Paruck, *Sas. Coins*, 2, has: Anōšagan.

larchate. I shall deal with these questions in the following chapter which is devoted entirely to the subject of the exilarchate during the early stages of the Muslim period.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, I, 3350; cf. Naṣr b. Muzāḥim, 12, who cites the same information, speaking about "the daughters of Khusraw" (Kisrā; he might have simply meant "the king of Persia") and adding details on the *dihqān* to whom they were given and the honors bestowed upon them. Ya'qūbī, *Ta'riḫ*, II, 401; Yazīd's boasting: Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, II, 1874. Daughter of Yazdigird: Khalīfa ibn Khayyāt, II, 386f.; see also Jāhiz, *Rasā'il*, I, 82f. (in مناقب الترك); he says she was the daughter of Shīrawayh, named Fīrūzshāh. Sa'īd ibn Bīrīq, *Ta'riḫ*, II, 47: daughter of Fīrūz, son of Yazdigird (as in Ṭabarī), called Shāhqūd; Dhahabī, *Yawāqūt*, MSS BL Or 3371, 3890 (Cat. Rieu Suppl., 420f., 251ff.), fol. 14b, says Shāhqūd, daughter of Yazdigird; she was captured by Qutayba b. Muslim al-Khurāsānī, who handed her over to Ḥajjāj, who sent her to Walīd; but see *idem*, *Ta'riḫ*, V, 188, where he contradicts himself, saying that she was a daughter of Fīrūz, son of Yazdigird, and was captured together with her sister, Shāhfarand. So also Tha'ālibī, *Laṭā'if*, 64.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EXILARCHATE

1. *The exilarch's status and responsibilities*

(68) During the period under discussion, the leadership of the Jewish Diaspora consisted of four centers: the Exilarchate, the Sura yeshiva, the Pumbedita yeshiva, and the Palestinian yeshiva, and every Jewish community was subordinate to one of these centers. Elsewhere I have dealt in depth with the characteristics of this non-uniform world leadership, especially with regard to its Palestinian component.

The Exilarchate was undoubtedly the oldest of the central institutions to emerge in the Diaspora; it was typical of the Babylonian Jews and also its earliest institution, for Babylonia was also the first of the diasporas and the Jewish people kept faith with the House of David even in exile. The tradition connecting the Exilarchate with the House of David goes back as far as Jehoiachin, the exiled king of Judah. While the validity of this tradition can be questioned, and some of the ancients were inclined to ridicule it, I nevertheless believe it to be fundamentally genuine, if only for the simple reason that a Jewish community as sizable as that of Babylonia and Persia would not have readily acknowledged unfounded claims of kinship with the House of David for any length of time; just as they would not have accepted unfounded kinship with the house of Aaron the priests, or even with the Levites. This was also the case with respect to this special kinship. The family of the exilarchs, however, has not left us a complete and convincing genealogy. In the *Seder ʿōlām zūṭā*, for example, there is a list of names beginning with Zerubabel, which has been fabricated from I Chron. iii—and which was entirely illusory. While interspersed amidst the biblical names are Nathan and Hūnā, contemporaries of Rabbī, known from the Talmud, and we also find there the utterly fictitious notion that Zerubabel returned to Babylonia from Palestine in order to become exilarch.

Nevertheless, it can be assumed that the Babylonian exiles acknowledged the legitimacy of the descendants of the royal house, who maintained their leadership throughout the period of Persian rule. According to talmudic tradition, the exilarch enjoyed a permanent status at the Persian court, wearing special vestments, such as the *qamra* and the *himyān*, that he received from the Persian monarch as marks of his high rank. He was granted complete authority over the Jewish community, and in ancient times, projected a strict and domineering personality. In keeping with Persian custom, the exilarchs maintained their own courts, owned considerable property and income, indulged in pomp and ceremony, and surrounded themselves with courtiers, servants, and slaves. They appointed their own judges and availed themselves of the best minds of their times. While the Talmud mentions

several exilarchs who were outstanding scholars and legislators, it is evident that the spiritual guidance of the Diaspora was for the most part not in their care. On the other hand, it was obvious that their occupations and aspirations were mainly secular and political, though in ancient times these would be inseparable from the overall religious system. The comparatively low spiritual profile they maintained evidently derived from the hereditary character of their position, which was limited to a single family.

Under Islam, the status and responsibilities of the exilarch were considerably reduced despite the deep impression the exilarchs made on the average Muslim as well as on the rulers, who had respect for the offspring of the House of David, whom they viewed as a prophet. At the same time, tensions between the exilarchs and the yeshivot that had originated during the Persian period seem to have increased under Islamic rule, becoming almost unbearable at times.

From the story of Bustanai—which I have discussed in the previous chapter—we learn that the Muslims regarded the exilarch as the central figure within the Jewish community. As we have seen, this was confirmed in the Jewish sources, in the story of his receiving that special gift, the Persian princess, and also in Islamic sources which I found describing his personality, status, and struggles. Half a millennium later, Benjamin of Tudela (in the latter half of the twelfth century) states that in his day, the exilarch still received the caliph's "seal for all the Jewish communities". While there was no preserved evidence of such a document at the time, Lazarus attempted to learn something of the substance of such an appointment of the leader of the Jews on the part of the rulers from the version of the appointment of the Nestorian *katholikos*, who was considered head of the Christians and their sects in the Abbasid caliphate, in his function as head of the largest church. This writ of appointment from AD 1138 was preserved in a large book of 12 volumes, a sort of anthology of political annals which Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Ḥamdūn collected some time during the mid-twelfth century. It states there that the caliph appoints the *katholikos* after he had been chosen by the leaders of the Church; an act which symbolically expressed the rulers' authority to confirm or reject the leadership adopted by the "protected people". The document cited by Ibn Ḥamdūn enumerates the leader's powers—e.g. the authority to make local appointments, the management of communal property, and the administration of pious foundations—and warns them against disobedience or rebellion against the rulers. Today, we know of at least two similar and earlier documents from the latter half of the eleventh century, that deal with the appointment of the patriarchs. Further, we find that in May 1193, Ṣalāḥ al-dīn's firstborn, al-Malik al-Afdal ʿAlī, appointed Abū'l-Maʿālī b. Abī'l-Riḍā b. Farah "head of the Jewish denomination and its sects, the Rabbānites, the Karaites, and the Samaritans" in Damascus, in all of Palestine and Syria, al-Salt (Trans-Jordan) and their districts. His obligations would be related to the Jews' judicial and civil status, circumcision, charity, and taxes (*rasm*). An appointment of a similar nature and content was granted at the beginning of the thirteenth century to Daniel b. Eleazar, head of the Baghdad yeshiva (sec. 267, below). Hence we may assume that identical writs of appointment were originally sent to the exilarchs. Ultimately, how-

ever, it was the heads of the yeshivot in Baghdad who received such official recognition, but this is a matter to be dealt with on its own.⁶⁸

(69) The special status still enjoyed by the exilarch in the mid-tenth century was expressed and symbolized in Nathan the Babylonian's description of the 'coronation' of the exilarch. According to him, it represented a sort of pact with the people, with "public opinion" being regarded as the decisive voice: "Then the two heads of the yeshivot come together with members of their yeshivot, with all the heads of the community and the elders". The meeting would take place in the home of a prominent and prosperous Baghdadi "such as Neṭīrā", thereby conferring lasting prestige upon the host. What Nathan describes here is a sort of special convention of the leading members of the community who decide who should be appointed to the role of exilarch. Once the election has been completed, the ceremonies would proceed. These were set for the end of the week. On the Thursday, the exilarch would be blessed in the synagogue and the *shōṣār* would be blown; and the entire community would shower him with gifts of money, clothing, jewelry, and precious vessels. Huge feasts with "all sorts of food-stuffs, beverages, desserts, and sweetmeats" were served on both the

⁶⁸ See my discussion: Gil, *Hist. of Palest.*, I, 490ff. See the doubts and derision with regard to the royal Davidian genealogy of the exilarchs, BT, *Sanh.*, 31a, describing the conversation at the meal given by R. Judah the *nāsī*, and attended by Judah and Hezekiah, the sons of R. Hiyya—the main point being "the house of David will not be restored unless two clans of Israel disappear—namely, the exilarch in Babylonia and the *nāsī* in Palestine". The term *himyān* is still in use in Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, II, 45, with the meaning of a money-belt. On the exilarchic genealogies: Liver, *Tōledōt*, 42-45. On the lack of credibility of the genealogical list: S. Assaf, *Teg. ha-geon.*, 25. See Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 40; see in Berliner, *Qṣār ʾōv*, 1876, 36ff., the text of Samuel b. Samson: "And from there we went to Hebron, and the exilarch brought a seal (i.e. a written order) with him from the king, and in the name of Muḥammad (!), their mistaken (Prophet), who (the king) is *al-khalīfā*". The exilarch, then, still went about with the writ of appointment (the 'seal') given to him by the caliph; cf. Yaari, *Iggerōt*, 79. See Lazarus, *MGWJ*, 78 I (1934), 285, 295. On Ibn Ḥamdūn and his book (the *Tadhkira*), see Brockelmann, *GAL*, G I, 181; S I, 493. This document has already been published four times, most recently by Conrad; see his discussion in I. 'Abbas *Jub. Vol.*, 83, and the Arabic text, *ibid.*, 91-94, with details of previous editions in the notes. (On p. 97, he translates *wuqūḥim* as "their concerns"; this should, in fact, be "their *waqfs*", this is a cardinal issue—the maintenance and administration of the pious foundations which constituted the principal economic basis of communal life and activities.) Similar writs of appointment can be found in Mārī ibn Sulaymān, *Majdal*, I, 133, 147; the appointment of 'Abdyishūc as patriarch by Caliph al-Qā'im, either in AH 464 (AD 1071/2) or at the end of Muḥarram, AH 480 (the beginning of May, AD 1087). In Ṣāfar, AH 485 (April-May, AD 1092), Caliph al-Muqtaḍī appointed the patriarch Makīkhā. See the expression *amwāl wuqūḥim*, the property of their *waqfs*, which also appears in the writ of appointment, *ibid.*, 135, line 8. I do not see why Conrad considers the text of Ibn Ḥamdūn to be different, and even more significant, than the two others. There was undoubtedly an ancient and stable Muslim tradition involved in the formulation of such writs of appointment, as proven also by writs of appointment found in the Geniza, such as TS Ar 38.93, ed. Khan, *Ar. Leg. and Adm. Docs.*, 460-466 (no. 121; he translates *rasm*: regulation); that appointee, 'Abdallah b. Abū'l-Riḍā, is perhaps "Obadiah the great *nagid*, the legitimate prince, *nagid* of Palestine and Judaea, of blessed memory, son of 'Ullā the trustful, trustee of the Court", mentioned in a genealogical list, ENA 2592, f. 26, ed. Mann, *Jews*, II, 313. Also in the Geniza is a writ of appointment issued by the Egyptian vizier al-Afdāl (late eleventh century), for a Christian dignitary: TS Ar 39.452, 453, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 527 n. 14; Gil, *Hist.*, 510ff. and n. 19. Confirmation that it was a long-standing custom for the ruler to appoint the religious officials of the *dhimmīs* comes from the draft (or copy) of a writ of appointment issued by the Fatimid caliph to the head of the Palestinian yeshiva, Solomon b. Judah; see Gil, *Palest.* II, doc. no. 311, and the discussion in *idem*, *Hist.*, 508f.

Thursday and the Friday. This is the Hebrew version of Nathan the Babylonian's account; that part of the Arabic original, which probably contained many more details, was apparently lost. On the sabbath, there was a great ceremony in the synagogue. The previous day, a wooden podium (*migdal*) would be set up. Behind this platform, which was covered with rugs and hung with a sort of curtain, the exilarch, together with the heads of the yeshivot, would await the opening of the ceremony, accompanied by the well-practiced singing of psalms and hymns. With the appearance of the exilarch on the podium, the entire congregation would rise and remain standing until he took his seat. Following this, the heads of the yeshivot would appear and kneel (!) before him and take their seats at his side, the head of the Sura yeshiva to his right and the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva to his left. After the cantor blesses him in a low voice, the exilarch gives a sermon on the day's reading from the Torah, which the *meturgeman*, (the 'translator' or 'transmitter') would loudly declaim to the entire assembly. At times, the head of the Sura yeshiva would give the sermon in his stead. Next would come a homily on some halachic issue to which one of the scholars (the wise elders) would respond. The cantor would again bless the exilarch and the heads of the yeshivot and afterwards he would call out the names of the various communities, announcing their donations in the order of their largesse. This would be followed by the reading of the Torah, and after a priest (*kohen*) and a levite were called up, the exilarch would receive the scroll from the cantor and read a portion. Standing alongside him, the head of the Sura yeshiva reads the Targum. The reading of the Torah is done while standing. The *rāshē kallā* and other officials of the yeshivot have yet to read, apart from the heads of the yeshivot who do not read, for they were preceded by others. Following the service, the exilarch would invite the gathering to his home and offer hospitality to all of his followers. Henceforth, he would not leave his house, remaining at home to receive his visitors for the entire week; even religious services would be conducted within his walls. The sole exception to this rule were naturally his own visits to the caliph. The exilarch then traveled seated in a carriage "similar to those used by royal ministers", and accompanied by "up to fifteen men" and one of the slaves, while the Jewish onlookers along the route would join the entourage and accompany him along the way.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ See Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 83f. The matter of Neṭīrā and the other Baghdadi financiers is discussed below (sections 355-367). The 'coronation' ceremony recalls the appointment of ʿAḍud al-dawla as described by Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VII, 98-100, e.g. how the caliph sits behind the *ṣitāra* (curtain), in order that none of the Daylamis should see him before he is seen by ʿAḍud al-dawla (AH 369, AD 979/80). Nathan the Babylonian was an alien in Qayrawān, where he told his story; the way in which he stresses matters of eating, in several places, seems to indicate that he was hungry. Some scholars have tried to identify the exilarch whose coronation is described by Nathan. See e.g. Baron, *Saadia Anniv.*, 28, who also attempted to prove that it was not David b. Zakkai, as Pumbedita did not recognize him, and that accordingly, the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva could not have been sitting (at his left) at that ceremony. He therefore concludes that Judah, the son of David, is apparently the one described (AD 940/1). It seems to me, however, that what Nathan is offering is no more than a general description of what he had seen in Baghdad while he was living there, and that—at least, in this part of his story—he did not intend to refer to a specific exilarch. On the joint solemn appearance of the exilarch and the two heads of the yeshivot, see also *Resp. Hemdā genūzā*, paragraph iv (on the way

(70) Despite what we have learned so far about the exilarch, and assuming that the exilarch enjoyed greater power than the heads of the yeshivot, at least at the beginning of the period under discussion, along comes Nathan the Babylonian's story which minimizes the extent of his authority. The story reveals that the sphere of the exilarch's authority included mainly the eastern area of the caliphate, that is, the land extending eastward from the Tigris. As to the exilarch's court, we learn from both Nathan the Babylonian's story and from a gaon's responsum, that it was called *bāvā de-marūtā* ("the Gate of the Master"), and a certain Rav Šemaḥ is mentioned, "head of the judges of *marūtā* Ḥisdai, son of *marūtā* Naṭrunai the exilarch"; and elsewhere: Šemaḥ b. Solomon "the Judge of the Gate of *marūtā* Ḥisdai"; and possibly his father Solomon was also a judge under the exilarch as well, for he was also called "Mar Šemaḥ *bar* Solomon, head of the yeshiva" (although we are not aware of a head of the Babylonian yeshiva named Solomon.) And at the end of one responsum we find: *bēt dīnā de-nāsī* (the court of the *nāsī*, i.e. the exilarch).

In ancient times, the exilarch also appointed the heads of the yeshivot: thus for example, Solomon b. Ḥisdai, who appointed Mar Rav Samuel (grandson of Rabba), and subsequently, Rav Yehudai b. Naḥman, heads of the Sura yeshiva. At any rate it appears that the appointment of the head of the yeshiva had first to be confirmed by the exilarch. Somewhat later, according to Nathan the Babylonian, a three-fold process developed involving the exilarch and the heads of the Sura and Pumbedita yeshivot, each requiring the approval of the other two to confirm any appointment. A typical example of this procedure was the letter from Elijah ha-Kohen b. Abraham who is evidently writing from Raqqa on the Euphrates, where he served as *dayyān*, regarding a writ of appointment from the exilarch and from the heads of the yeshivot (in ca. 1100). By this time, however, the exilarchate was entering on a prolonged period of decline.

To judge by Nathan the Babylonian's description, the exilarch had residences in both Baghdad and Qaṣr. The latter seems to have been his main dwelling, where he also maintained an estate and considerable property (sec. 290 below). The exilarch's home in Baghdad was located in a place referred to in Nathan the Babylonian's Hebrew version as *ereṣ 'atīqa*, which we understand was the *sūq al-'atīqa*, apparently the very heart of public Jewish life in Baghdad (sec. 283 below).⁷⁰

of reading the Torah on a fast day): "such is the custom in the yeshiva and in the presence of the *nāsī*, as the heads of the two yeshivot and their scholars sit in front of him", etc.

⁷⁰ The court of the exilarch: BT, *Bāvā Bātrā*, 65a: "since you are close to the Gate of the Exilarch". Legal decisions by the exilarch: Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 80f.; Harkavy, *Resp.*, 276f. (no. 555); cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 483, n. 29; and NS 10 (1919/20), 338ff.; Šemaḥ b. Solomon: see Dukes, *Ben Chananja*, 4 (1861), 141: *šemaḥ rōsh dayyānē de-vāvā de-marwātā* ("head of the judges of the Gate of the Exilarch"); Harkavy, *Resp.*, 389; *Halākhōt gedōlōt* (1972), I, 173, 296, 387; see the responsum of Šemaḥ the chief judge, on the husband's duty to provide for the needs of his first wife: TS Box F 11.22, ed. Friedman, *Ribbūy nāšīm*, 162-165; on the appointment of the head of the Sura yeshiva, see Sherira, *Letter*, 106; cf. Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 455; Eppenstein, *Beiträge*, 9f.; Elijah ha-Kohen b. Abraham: see 73.

2. *The Exilarch in Arab sources*

(71) In the above discussion of the Bustanai affair, I have already referred to the fact that the Arab sources quite frequently mention the son of the exilarch (*ibn ra's al-jālūt*). From the early medieval period we can gather further material relating to the exilarch but there is significantly almost no mention of the heads of the Babylonian yeshivot, Sura and Pumbedita. On the other hand, it is possible to glean genuine information concerning the exilarch's status and authority as seen from the contemporary educated Muslim view. At the same time, however, we encounter some curious remarks which reflect certain contemporary attitudes which lack any real historical validity.

Here and there we encounter attempts to sum up the function of the exilarch historically. Ṭabarī, for instance, seeks the origins of the institution in the days of Pontius Pilate, when the leadership of the diaspora was in the hands of... (here the copyists did not know how to spell the names and in the printed editions there are only 'skeletons' without diacritical dots as well as different versions). Al-Khawārizmī explains that the exilarch (*ra's al-jālūt*) is the "Head of the Jews": *jālūt* means exiles, i.e. those who were exiled from their homeland in Palestine (*bayt al-maqdis*). He also states further that the exilarch must derive from the House of David. Bīrūnī is aware of the tradition relating the quotation "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah" (Gen.49:10) to the exilarch. "The kingdom will not depart from Judah until the arrival of the Messiah whom they await; the Jews claim that this had already happened, for *ra's al-jālūt*, which means the head of the exiles who were exiled from their homeland in Palestine (*bayt al-maqdis*) is the master of all the Jews in the world, who obey him in all their cities, and in most of their matters his voice is decisive". Abū'l-Fidā' (writing at the beginning of the fourteenth century and drawing on ancient sources), believes the *ra's al-jālūt* to be the ruler of the Jews since the destruction of the Second Temple, maintaining also that *Bukht Naṣr* (Nebuchadnezzar) banished their king and appointed Herod to rule over them, at first on behalf of Persia and later on, the Greeks, and eventually representing Augustus and the emperors who followed him. Afterwards Titus waged war against the Jews and annihilated them, destroying their temple once again. This account implies an awareness of the fact that the office of exilarch no longer existed in Abū'l-Fidā's time.

A comparatively long and detailed review of the exilarch's role can be found in al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ṭabāṭabā, a Shiite of the Zaydī sect, who wrote in the first half of the ninth century. He speaks of the *waṣīyya*, a term which has considerable significance in Shiite theology and refers to "the heritage of the divine vision" also bestowed upon the Jews. It became the legacy of the House of David, which claimed that it was passed on from generation to generation. Out of excessive devotion to the concept of the legitimacy of descendants of the prophets, which played a central role in Shiite ideology, al-Qāsim extols the Jews who would not compromise on their *waṣīyya* and were prepared to kill anyone who claimed to be a prophet but does not stem from the House of David, in his words:

...afterwards the Jews attributed the *waṣīyya* to themselves and claimed that it came to the House of David and ascribed the *waṣīyya* to the House of David, and it was said that it is handed down from father to son and claimed that the son inherits the *waṣīyya* from his father. The House of David live in Iraq and are called *ra's al-jālūt* and they are paid (by the Jews) a fifth of their income, and (are paid) for the male first-born of people, sheep, and cattle. If an ox was slaughtered, they are paid a dirham and a third, and an eighth part of the liver. When there is a marriage, he is paid four dirhams and whoever builds a house, the same amount is handed over. And they are not allowed to divorce wives without his permission or that of his representative. And for the divorce, they pay him four dirhams. And he raises Jewish children who were born out of wedlock or do not know who was their father, until they are adults. When they are grown-up, they are his slaves and he may do whatever he pleases with them, or sell them. They are the ones who convey him when he leaves his home, for they would not think of letting him go by foot. And they (the exilarchs) claim that the Jews are their property.

In the continuation, I shall return to the subject of the children who were "born out of wedlock". The exilarch is an expression and symbol of the wisdom of the Jews: when an exilarch was questioned about the Jews' educational system, he replied that the Jews had no special program: children acquired their values in the course of their games. Whoever asks: who will join me? possesses a desirable quality and is likely to become a good man. But whoever asks: with whom is it worthwhile being? shows evidence of a bad character.

Several Muslim authors deny that the exilarch had any real authority. Al-Jāhīz, the earliest among them, when explaining the function of the *shofar*, which he portrays as a sort of trumpet (*būq*) deriving from the Persians: the Jews use the *shofar* when the exilarch wishes to punish someone who is guilty; he forbids any communication with that person and the *shofar* is sounded as the punishment is pronounced. After describing the announcement of the ban, al-Jāhīz adds:

This ban on communication is not a punishment laid down in their books. Neither the catholicos nor the exilarch possess the authority in the Muslim world to impose imprisonment or flogging; they can only impose fines or excommunication (literally: forbid speaking). The catholicos would frequently overlook matters involving members of the wealthier class or those with connections at court. Timotheos, for example, wanted to impose a ban on ʿAwn al-ʿIbādī (the Nestorian), because he took two concubines into his household: Shashqīl (?), Michael, and Theophil refrained from having Manuel blinded, for in their law whoever sides with the Muslims against the Byzantines is to be killed, but if he is a man of standing, then blinding may be imposed instead of execution. In this case however (i.e. of Manuel), they did not observe their own law but spared him.

From al-Jāhīz's account, it can be seen that while both the exilarch and the katholikos lacked the authority to judge criminal cases, there were in fact exceptions. As far as the katholikos was concerned, he is being accused here of favoritism. We do not know of similar incidents attributed to the exilarch. Elsewhere I shall discuss the question of arrests and flogging that were used in the courts during the period under discussion. A much earlier incident, related in the Talmud, however, provides evidence of these forms of punishment: "Bar Ḥamā killed a person. Then the exilarch said to Abbā

b. Jacob: Go look into the matter; if he did commit murder, let his eyes be blinded". While one version reads *le-kaḥlinhū*, i.e. "with a white-hot iron", Hananel interpreted it to mean that the man should be made to pay a (large) fine.⁷¹

(72) Similar things were written by the Andalusian writer Ibn Ḥazm, at the beginning of the eleventh century, in a letter to Samuel ha-Nagid (as it appears in the printed edition of his book) who claimed that the exilarchs stemmed from the House of David and that they have status, prestige and power. Actually, he says, the *ra's al-jālūt* possesses no authority whatsoever over the Jews or others: his title is purely nominal. He has neither rights nor prerogatives and owes his position to the Muslim rulers, who respect the descendants of the House of David. Herod, his son and grandson, were not even Jews, as some historians claim, but were apparently Romans.

Further supposedly negative comments were made by al-Jāhīz about the exilarch: during the period of Persian rule, the exilarch was obliged to pay 4000 dirhams if the Persian new year fell on a Saturday. The source of the fine is not known but this was, he writes, the custom and it was a regular tax, like the poll tax. Several sources beginning with al-Khawārizmī's *Maḥāṣin al-ʿulūm*, record a curious detail: only someone possessing a wide arm-span (*ṭawīl al-bāʿ*) may be appointed exilarch, i.e. "his fingers must reach his knees when he is standing upright". The origin of this notion apparently derives from the Hebrew expression *ōrekḥ yad* (lit. "arm's length"), encountered in connection with Bustanai; while the phrase simply means 'mighty', and was taken literally by the Muslim writers. Not surprisingly, some Shiites detected similarities between the exilarchs and the descendants of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, to whom they also attributed certain physical characteristics. We have noted above what al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm had to say about the prophets who did not stem from the House of David. The traumatic events, the Prophet's family's gradual loss of power, and the murder of his offspring, disturbed these writers—and not only the Shiites

⁷¹ Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, I, 741; Khawārizmī, *Maḥāṣin*, 34f.; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 14; Abū'l-Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, I, 88; see the fragment from al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm Ṭabāṭabā, from his *الرد على الروافض من أصحاب الغلو* (MS Berlin, Glaser 101, fol. 110a), ed. Pines, *REJ*, 100:71, 1935. The word used to denote payment, in the text, is *qaṣṣa*, from *κεφαλῆ*, also found in Syriac. On the *imām* al-Qāsim, see Madelung, *Der Imam*, 86ff.; esp. p. 90, with regard to his positive and tolerant attitude toward non-Muslims, such as his view that one does not have to wash one's hands after shaking the hand of a Jew. On education, see Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, V, 811. Some of this general information might have been copied by Muslim writers from Oriental Christian literary sources written in Arabic; there are Ya'qūbite manuscripts in Arabic which contain chapters on "the history of the Bible", in which "the order of the generations" according to the Jews is recorded; in one such text, the Bible is said to have been rescued when Hadrian conquered Jerusalem and people "from the house of David" took it with them to Baghdad, where they are said to "live to this day". It was those people who copied it, sending it to all the Jewish tribes; see Graf, *GCAL*, II, 290ff., including further references. See Jāhīz, *Ḥayawān*, IV, 27f.; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1979/20), 360. On ʿAwn al-ʿIbādī, see: Fiey, *Chrétien*, 51f.; *ibādī* is said to have denoted the Christians of Ḥīra, but I tend to believe it referred to a Nestorian. Fiey assumed that he was the one for whom one of the famous streets of Baghdad, *darb ʿawn*, was named. According to Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, VI, 305f., ʿAwn was the leader (صاحب) of Ḥīra, and he tells of a meeting he had with Caliph al-Ma'mūn; Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫ*, III, 752: Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd stayed with him; Bīrūnī, *Jamāhir*, 52f.: he was a famous dealer in jewels, in the days of al-Mahdī (775-785). See the tradition on Bar Ḥamā: BT, *Sanh.*, 27a.

among them. For instance, Ṭabarī quotes a tradition attributed to an anonymous exilarch who heard it from his father:

Whenever I passed near Karbalā (where Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī was killed), I would spur on my beast, in order to distance myself from the place. I asked him: “why?” he replied: “We have a tradition that a descendant of the prophet would be murdered on this spot and I feared that I was that person”. But when Ḥusayn was killed, I said: “He is the man of whom our tradition speaks”. From that time onwards, when I passed that place I would ride as usual, without hurrying past.

Similarly there are the exilarch’s remarks to the Shiite Abū’l Aswad, one of the first Arab grammarians, as recorded by Ibn Lahf’a (end of the eighth century):

Although King David and I are separated by seventy generations, I still command enormous respect among the Jews. They recognize my rights as a descendant of the royal house and feel obliged to protect me. You and your prophet, on the other hand, are but one generation apart and yet you have already killed his offspring, Ḥusayn.

Another tradition was related to the “son of the exilarch” who was visiting the Umayyad caliph, Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, on an occasion when Muḥammad b. ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥanafīyya, was also present. Comparing the two men, the exilarch’s son noticed that there was something special about the latter: he seemed more like a prophet than Hishām and therefore more entitled to the role of caliph. By way of example, the “son of the exilarch” points to himself: his status was assured, despite the forty generations separating him from his ancestor. At about the same time, on the eve of the Abbasid revolution, a group of ten great scholars was known to have met in Baṣra: a Sunni, a Shiite, a Manichean, a Christian, several sectarians, and the son of the exilarch, who was also a poet. The vizier Abū’l-Qāsim Ismaʿīl b. ʿAbbād (who was born in 938 and died in 995) is said to have had a discourse with the exilarch in Rayy (ca. 985), on the subject of the inimitability of the Qurʾān (*ʾiʿjāz al-qurʾān*). While the Muslims argued that the Qurʾān cannot be imitated and that its divine origin is manifest in its literary perfection—a central motif in the orthodox Muslim view of the Qurʾān and its divine origin—the exilarch argued that the vizier’s own writings, which were models of literary perfection, furnished ample proof that the Qurʾān could indeed be imitated. (That exilarch may have been ʿAzariah b. Solomon, the father of Daniel who became gaon in Palestine later on.)

Finally, there is the strange legend of a miraculous mirror in which it was possible to see the future: handed down generation after generation, from Adam to King Solomon, it ultimately came into the possession of the exilarch, who gave it to the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān, during his struggles with the Abbasids. On seeing distressing things reflected in the mirror, Marwān had the exilarch killed. The mirror remained with Marwān’s maidservant and was taken from her by the Abbasid Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr.⁷²

⁷² See Ibn Ḥazm, MS Leiden, Warner no. 480, fol. 60b, cited by Goldziher, *Jeschurun*, 8 (1871), 76f., where the polemic with Samuel ha-Nagid is recorded; see, in Goldziher, *ibid.*, a summary of the anti-Jewish arguments ascribed to Ibn Ḥazm; also *idem*, *REJ*, 8 (1884), 125;

3. *The Rāshūt*

(73) This simple term *rāshūt* is frequently encountered in the sources of the period and means “the leadership”, that is, the area or sphere in which the authority, leadership, appointments, finances and judgments, are controlled by one of the heads of the four authoritative centers of the diaspora: the exilarch, the Sura yeshiva, the Pumbedita yeshiva, and the Palestinian yeshiva. To a large degree, the administration of these four domains was protected by the tradition of generations but there were also ‘unaffiliated’ territories where authority depended largely on the predilections of the local community; this led to considerable friction and even real conflicts over the issue of the *rāshūt*.

As mentioned above, it seems that during both the Persian and the early Islamic periods, the exilarch inherited the administrative and hierarchic po-

cf. Fischel, in *J.L. Magnes Volume*, 181-187; see the printed edition of Ibn Hazm, *Milal*, I, 118, which states that Ibn Hazm himself met with Samuel ha-Nagid in AH 404, AD 1013/4; on the other hand, see the epistle of Ibn Hazm, *al-radd ‘alā ibn naghrīla*, 45f., which Stroumsa, *JAOS*, 107 (1987), 767, has shown to have a false heading, as Ibn Hazm’s critique was not directed against Samuel ha-Nagid, but against Ibn al-Rāwandi and his *kitāb al-dāmigh*. Cf. also: Wasserstein, *Rise and Fall*, 197-209. That same Ibn Hazm, *Jamhara*, 506, says the opposite as well: “the authority and the leadership of the Children of Israel are in the hands of the offspring of David, to this day”. See the article of Zucker in *Kaminka Jub. Vol.*, 31-48, for a discussion on Ibn Hazm’s text on the Jews; he mainly refers to an anonymous medieval Jewish text of anti-Muslim polemics, from a manuscript kept in Breslau; see also Perles, *R. Salomo b. Abr. b. Adereth*, in the Appendix, where he ascribes these polemics, without sufficient ground, to Solomon b. Adereth (I thank Prof. J. Fenton for calling Zucker’s article to my attention). The text of Ibn Lahī’a, see Jāhiz, *al-Maḥāsīn*, 14, 362, is cited by Goldziher in his above-mentioned articles at a time when Goldziher was not yet aware that it was written by al-Jāhiz. See also the quotations in Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *‘Iqd*, II, 309. On *ṭawīl al-bā’*, the wide arm-span, see Khawārizmī, *Mafātīḥ al-‘ulūm*, 34, and Būnī, *Āthār*, 58, who refers to the descendants of ‘Alī immediately following the tradition concerning the exilarch. Abū’l-Aswad al Du‘alī (or: al-Dīlī) was one of the settlers in Baṣra; he was a poet and an important adherent of ‘Alī; one ascribes to him (without any proof) a primordial status in grammar and in the vocalization of the Qur’ān. He died in 688. See the article, ‘Abū’l-Aswad al Du‘alī, in *EP* (by J.W. Fück). Al-Qāsim Ibn Ibrāhīm also cites the tradition about the long hands, see Pines, *REJ*, 100 (1935), 72f., saying it is a downright lie (it is not clear whether the lie is the content of the belief or that Jews believe it). From Isma‘īlī traditions, gathered by Ivanow, *Ism. Trad.*, 63, one could deduce that in general Arabs used to see the Jew as more developed in body than others, or at least more developed than the Arabs. On the wide arm-span in the Bustanai story, see Heilprin, *Seder ha-dōrōt*, 177, cf. Gil, *Tarbiz*, 48 (1978/9), 42 n. 18. Karbalā: Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, II, 287. The son of the exilarch: *Akhbār al-dawla al-‘abbāsiyya*, 171f.; the group of Baṣra: Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *Nujūm*, II, 29 (under the year 156); the colloquium in Rayy: Yāqūt, *Irshād*, VI, 218ff.; cf. Rosenthal, *HUCA*, 21 (1948), 156. The mirror: Ibn al-Zubayr, *Dhakḥā’ir*, 166ff. Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 203 (under Bābil, in the description of Daniel’s cave), has a traditional tale that in the time of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, it happened that Mujāhid b. Jabr met with the exilarch (with the permission of al-Ḥajjāj) and asked him to be shown the two devils, Hārūt and Mārūt. According to the tale, the exilarch sent a Jew to guide him and the Jew warned him not to mention the name of God in the presence of those devils; but Mujāhid was so disturbed by the sight that he forgot the warning, and they only managed to extricate themselves with great difficulty; cf. Goldziher, *REJ*, 8 (1884), 124. The similarity of the faithfulness of the Jews towards the Davidian offspring and the devotion of the Shiite sects towards the house of ‘Alī was well known to Muslim intellectuals in the Middle Ages; see, for instance, Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *‘Iqd*, I, 353 (edition of 1331/1913); cf. Hirschberg, *Vienna Rabb. Sem. Memorial Vol.*, 123.

sition of his predecessors in many spheres, and enjoyed preference even in regions beyond his own *rāshūt*. This preference undoubtedly provided him with many advantages which increased his prestige, his privileges, and to no small degree—his finances and property. It is not inadvertent that Sherira Gaon speaks in his letter of “the days of the Persians and the beginning of the Ishmaelites’ days as well, when one used to buy the exilarchate for large sums”. In the course of many generations, it became the practice for the exilarch’s authority to be defined geographically—according to Nathan the Babylonian’s general description: the eastern regions, i.e. the Persian territories, which were entirely separate from the yeshivot’s spheres of influence, to the extent that, according to Nathan, “the heads of the yeshivot have no jurisdiction over anyone from the exilarch’s *rāshūt*. Nor could one appeal against a decision made in one *rāshūt* to the authority of another”. Nevertheless, Nathan himself describes just such an appeal, which was at the heart of the dispute between Saadia Gaon and the exilarch, David b. Zakkai. Similarly, we read in one of the responsa published by Harkavy: “A decision of the Court, as adopted at the Gate of *Marūtā* David, the exilarch.... this document, sewn and rolled into one, was brought before Us, at the Gate of the yeshiva, to the Court of our Lord and Master Saadia, head of the yeshiva of *Mātā Maḥsiya* (i.e. Sura) and we were asked to order that it be studied and validated, and decide on the legal matters arising from the validation”. This arrangement may have been peculiar to Baghdad, however, for it was a new city, and hence the rights acquired earlier may not have been applicable. We find an interesting judgment in one of Sherira Gaon’s letters: “half the *rāshūt* of Babylonia belongs to the house of Kafnai”; the house of Kafnai meaning “the house of the exilarch” in the Muslim period, for Kafnai was the father of Bustanai, the exilarch at the time of the Arab conquest.

Evidently the exilarch ‘Uqba made a flagrant attempt at extending the boundaries of his *rāshūt* to far-off Khurāsān, which it seems had always been included in the jurisdiction of the Pumbedita yeshiva. Although in the Hebrew version it says “to return” which implies that Khurāsān had at some time been part of the exilarch’s *rāshūt*; but the original version in Arabic is quite different and the words “to return” are lacking. Nevertheless the exilarch’s precedence in earlier times is also obvious from the responsum of the gaon of Sura, Naṭrūnai b. Hillai (ca. 855), who quotes from his predecessor, Ṣādōq Gaon (i.e. Isaac Ṣādōq b. Jesse, approx. 810), defining “letters of the *rāshūt*” as “a document written by the exilarch to the judge, giving him permission to go and teach the Jews what is forbidden and what is permitted and instruct them in the words of the Torah; and its name in Aramaic is: *‘pitqā de-dayyānūtā’*”. On the other hand, Judah the Barcelonian’s *Sefer-ha-sheṭārōt* has: “*ipteqā* is a document conferred by the exilarch on a judge, giving him permission to go and judge.... similarly, when the people of the yeshiva confer the *rāshūt* (on a judge), it is called an *ipteqā* document of the *rāshūt*”. It seems that in these matters there was actually no consensus of opinion and there appears to have been a constant struggle over who had the right of appointment. One can assume, however, that in quieter times, appointments were made on behalf of the yeshiva (or yeshivot) as well as on behalf of the exilarch. Even at a later stage, we find that the local judges requested writs of appointment from both the heads of

the yeshivot and the exilarch. And I shall return to this issue below in the chapter on the yeshivot.⁷³

(74) As to the exilarch's income, we find in the above-mentioned al-Qāsim b. Ibrahīm's survey, that the Jews paid a fifth part of their income to the exilarch, and also granted him various types of payments; and that he was given the rearing of children born of adulterous relationships or uncertain parenthood until they reached adulthood, when they were accorded the status of the exilarch's slaves and he was entitled to do with them as he pleased. This description is obviously somewhat absurd, although it may contain a grain of truth. And what he has to say about the raising of the 'bastards', the *mamzērīm*, may have been customary at some time or other, but there is no confirmation of this in any Jewish source. As to what he refers to as the taxes on marriage and divorce, he is undoubtedly referring to the obligation to draw up the requisite documents through the local courts. The information regarding payments (for both the ritual slaughtering or building) seems credible. We also find the expressions *khums*, *akhmās* (fifths), in the letter from the exilarch Hezekiah requesting the community in Fustat (in AD 1036) not to send him money from the Jewish pious foundations (*heqdēsh*) but only from the *akhmās*. Nathan the Babylonian provides us with further details, such as that there is a place in Babylonia (perhaps he means Baghdad, which he frequently refers to as Babylon), from whence the exilarch receives twice annually, on Passover and Sukkot, the sum of two dinars from every Jewish household; this was quite a substantial sum. Other sources of income are also mentioned: from Nahrwān "and all its environs", from Ḥulwān (a hundred and fifty dinars per year); from Qasr, his major base, as we have seen, he received thirty dinars per year. From each of the *ṭabbāḥīm* (apparently the ritual slaughterers, and the Arabic original probably had *al-dhabbāḥīn*), he received annually a quarter of a dinar. In difficult times, he imposed quotas on the communities, collecting these sums with the help of the Muslim authorities. Nathan the Babylonian estimates the exilarch's annual income at 700 dinars but one cannot rely on

⁷³ Assaf, *Taq. ha-g.*, 22, also stresses the priority of the exilarch at the beginning of the geonic period. See Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. Jew. Chron.*, II, 85f. Sherira, *Letter*, 92; Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 7, has his own explanation for Sherira Gaon's version. Eppenstein explains that it was the Persian kings who bought the exilarchs "with large sums of money", which is exactly the opposite of what Sherira meant; see Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *ibid.*, II, 81ff.; Harkavy, *Resp.*, 355f.; cf. Aptowitz, *JQR*, NS 4 (1913/4); 31, who disputes Harkavy's assertion that the exilarch's prerogative to appoint judges only began after the crisis in the exilarchate in the first half of the ninth century. In fact, Harkavy was referring to the period of Hayy Gaon, without specifying when the geonim started to issue writs of appointment. Aptowitz's argument is based upon Nathan's account which expressly mentions judges appointed by the head of the yeshiva, and this also becomes clear from the dispute between David b. Zakkai and Saadia Gaon, see Nathan in Neubauer, *Med. Jew. Chron.*, II, 81-82, 86. Harkavy based his argument on *Halākhōt pesūqōt*, 80 (par. 156), which is the statement of the gaon Isaac Šādōq that I cited here. See Judah of Barcelona, *Sefer ha-sheṭ.*, 134. See also *Sefer ha-eshkol* (Auerbach), II, 158: the *Halākhōt gedōlōt* and R. Šādōq Gaon said: "iggetet rāshūt is a letter issued by the Great Court" etc.; Coronel, *Resp.*, 17a (no. 110), where the principle is stated that a judge has to receive his *rāshūt* (i.e., appointment) from the head of the yeshiva, further cites a dictum of Hayy Gaon, that a judge has to be appointed by the exilarch. The whole discussion there is around the topic of whether a blind person (in both eyes, or in one eye only) is allowed to act as judge. The matter of ʿUqbā and Khurāsān: Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. Jew. Chron.*, II, 78.

this estimate as it seems unlikely that Nathan had access to the exilarch's accounts and his information was probably based on hearsay or simply gossip.

We find in Grätz a discussion on the question of whether the exilarch collected the poll tax on behalf of the Muslim rulers. On the basis of the *katholikos*' writ of appointment, Grätz inferred that the tax was collected centrally through the head of the denomination, and that evidently as far as the Jews were concerned, via the exilarch. What was stated in the writ of appointment, however, was merely the moral obligation to see to it that each *dhimmī* fulfilled this duty. Today we are definitely aware of the fact that the *qāḍī* in every locality was directly in charge of collecting the poll tax and that payment was made entirely on an individual basis, except in those towns in which ancient arrangements existed from the time of the conquest to pay a lump sum, such as Jerusalem and Tiberias, and I have dealt with this elsewhere.⁷⁴

4. *The exilarchs in the early period*

(75) In the distant past, the exilarchs evidently enjoyed a great deal of prestige and prominence within the Jewish community and even the Muslim rulers viewed them as the unquestioned leaders of this ethnic entity. This state of affairs is reflected in Rav Sherira Gaon's complaints in his *Letter*, saying that he no longer knows the proper sequence of the geonim of Sura owing to the frequent changes that took place at the beginning of that period, until the year Sel. 1000, i.e. AD 689: "since the *nesī'im* (i.e. the exilarchs) were the ones who would dismiss or appoint them".⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm, in: Pines, *REJ*, 100 (1935), 71, which I have already cited above. Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. Jew. Chron.*, II, 85f. Nahrwān and all its surrounding (*parwār*, a term which is found in the Bible [2Ki 23:11] is a Persian loan word: *parvara*, apparently meaning the area outside the walls, see Frye, *Wiet Mem. Vol.*, 11. See also *Kitāb sab'in lafza*, in Allony, *Goldziher Mem. Vol.*, 24). Baron, *Saadia Anniv. Vol.*, 92, compares the revenue of the exilarch with the much larger revenues of Muslim dignitaries. The analogy with the *qāḍīs* is certainly not apt, since the income of a *qāḍī* was not fixed, but depended on his rank, geographic location, and various other factors. Ibn Hujayra, *qāḍī* of Egypt (699-700), received 800 dinars annually, 200 of which were his regular income, the remainder being payment for additional functions. Other *qāḍīs* received thousands of dinars a year, see Tyan, *Histoire de l'org. jud.*, 338f. The letter of Hezekiah: 68, b, lines 2ff. See on the matter of taxes, Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 131. Gil, *Hist.*, 143-157. From a famous responsum ascribed to Sheshnā Gaon (Sura, ca. 670) one can understand that taxes were indeed collected on an individual basis: "whenever the authority or the tax collector demands that a community pronounce a ban" (on a debtor), etc., see *Sh'arē teshuvā*, par. 195. The use of such phraseology would have been impossible if the taxes were collected by a central Jewish body, such as the exilarch. Assaf's opinion that the collection of taxes was done through the local community (except in certain instances, as mentioned above) is without foundation; see his *Teqūfat ha-g.*, 19.

⁷⁵ Sherira, *Letter*, 105; cf. Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 7. Something which does not have a clear meaning for us is the addition, *bakhāmim dibberūhū*, repeated after the name of the exilarch, beginning with Shealtiel b. Jehoiachin; see *Seder 'olam zūtā*, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 70. This might have been written in the circle of the exilarchs themselves, intending to stress the legitimacy of the dynasty described there who allegedly were enjoying the support of the yeshivot. The term *dibberūhū* does not have a clearcut meaning. It might have meant either "guided him", or "appointed him", cf. the doubts of Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, 114f.

(76) Attempting to reconstruct the lists of exilarchs who followed Bustanai is no easy task. Some details are available in Sherira Gaon's *Letter* but he evidently did not ascribe much importance to genealogical lists and the order of succession to this office and merely mentions a number of early exilarchs incidentally.

There are also ten lists recording the sequence of the exilarchs: (1) TS 12.138 (Mann, *Texts*, II, 131); (2) Mosseri I.107; (=70), and see the introduction to this document; (3) Dropsie 462 (Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 20); (4) TS AS 150.148; (5) Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 58f.; (6) Damascus MS (Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, I, 196); Harkavy, *Resp.*, 378); (7) Pinsker, *Liqqūṭē qadmōniyōt*, II, 53; (8) Coronel, *Hamishshā qunṭrēsīm*, 110a; (9) The Tripoli Bible (Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, II, 248); (10) Bodl MS Heb f 40 (Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles*, II, 110).

Most of the lists have additional names at the beginning, some of which are based on talmudic sources or Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, while others are merely imaginary. Different versions of the same names also occur: °Uqbā, °Uqbah, °Aqīva; Nehemiah and Naḥmeimar; Abhamar, Abāmar, Abā Marī, Abbā; Hūna, Hūnā, Hunā, Hanīna, Hanīnai, Hunā Mar, and Hunāmar. Hūnāmar, son of the exilarch Mar Zūtrā was imprisoned in Tevet 781 Sel. (December-January, AD 469/70) and executed a year later (January 471). The exilarch Hūnā is said to have died in 819 Sel., AD 508, in one version, while elsewhere it is stated that he died in 822 Sel. i.e. AD 511. The common attribute of all these lists was that at the outset, they were not intended to serve any objective need for historical information but simply to prove the legitimacy of an offspring of the exilarchic family. List No.1 records the lineage of Šemah, who was Gaon of Palestine. His sons were banished, however, when they joined another branch of the family, the heirs of Daniel and °Anan II. List No. 2 deals with the lineage of Hezekiah, the fourth generation after Jehoshaphat and brother of the above-mentioned Šemah. Jehoshaphat was also gaon in Palestine, and his offspring joined the Karaite *nesi'im*. List No. 3 is the lineage of Zakkai, grandson of Zakkai b. °Azariah; the same Zakkai who was the brother of Daniel, Palestinian gaon. List No. 4 is the genealogical list of Nehemiah, who is not known from any other source and seems to have descended from David b. Zakkai, exilarch in the first half of the tenth century. List No. 5 provides the lineage of °Anan II, who lived in the latter half of the ninth century, some hundred years before Bīrūnī, who may have obtained the list from °Anan's descendants or those of his followers who had joined the Karaites. List No. 6 records the lineage of the descendants of Isaac (Isqawai) b. David, who was probably the brother of Solomon and the father of °Anan I. Isaac the exilarch, about whom there is some information, seems to have been the cousin of this Isaac. List No. 7 records the first part of the lineage of Solomon b. David, one of the later Karaite *nesi'im* whose ancestor was the aforementioned Jehoshaphat, gaon in Palestine. List No. 8 gives the first part of Yedidia b. Jesse's lineage; he was descended from Solomon b. °Azariah, the father of Daniel, who was gaon in Palestine. We have no further information concerning a brother of Daniel named Solomon. List No. 9 is the first part of the lineage of Sar Shālōm (his four sons are also mentioned). Sar Shālōm, "nāsī of Judaea", was a descendant of Solomon b Zakkai, apparently the

father of David who was exilarch during the first half of the tenth century. List No. 10 records David b. Zakkai's lineage.

It is possible to establish that in seven of the lists of genealogies—including two genealogies of rabbanite exilarchs and *nesī'im*—Ḥisdai, the son of Bustanai, is listed as the head of the dynasty. Ḥisdai, it will be recalled, was one of Bustanai's two sons by his Jewish wife; °Anan b. David was also one of his descendants. In List No. 3, Ḥisdai's brother Barādai (Barādoi) heads the lineage and Ḥisdai is listed as Barādai's son; presumably this was a lineage fabricated by Daniel b. °Azariah and his family to show that they were of a different extraction from that of °Anan's family. List No. 2 provides an additional column (after Bustanai): Solomon—Isqawai—Judah—Zakkai—Davidoi, resembling lists Nos. 9 and 10. In this column in list 2 as well as in list 10, Ḥisdai's name is omitted altogether; Bustanai is followed by Solomon, who was actually his grandson. This Solomon is only mentioned in the lists of Zakkai and his sons David and Josiah; the lists of °Anan's descendants naturally include David, Solomon's brother and father of °Anan. Most of the early exilarchs about whom we have information from other sources have evidently been omitted from these lists: Hananiah b. David (°Anan's brother), Naṭrūnai b. Hanīnai, Zakkai b. Aḥūnai, Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai, and °Uqbā. We can discredit the possibility from the very outset, that all those mentioned in the lists were actually exilarchs, unless this is confirmed by some other source.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Hunāmār, Hūnā, see Sherira, *Letter*, 96, 97, 98; Josiah, Jehoshaphat, and their descendants (lists nos. 2 and 7), cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 657-669; on Zakkai b. °Azariah, see *ibid.*, 583f., and *idem*, *Te'uda*, 7 (1991), 302. List no. 6 is taken from the Elisha Crescas manuscript, written in 1383; the Tripoli Bible (Tripoli of Libya) was copied and completed in 1312. The sons of Sar Shālōm who are mentioned there are: Melkizedek, the *ḥawāja khalīfa* (i.e., the *nāsī*); Pinhās, the *ḥawāja badī' al-zamān* (sounding like "the wonder of a lifetime"); Hezekiah, the *ḥawāja jumhūr* (perhaps, 'the excellent', or "head of the community"); and Josiah. List no. 10 was written Sel. 1470, AM 4919, i.e., AD 1159. In the list no. 5 the name of Zūṭrā was garbled; due to the indistinct nature of the Arab script it was read and copied: Nūshra. See Lazarus, *JJGL* 10 (1890): 174; and Goode, *JQR*, NS 31 (1940-41): 154, whose conclusions are unreliable because he made use of the sources and lists in an uncritical way.

Comparative table of lists

(1) TS 12.138	(2) Mosseri 1.107 = 70	(3) Dropsie 462	(4) TS AS 150.148	(5) Bīrūnī
Ḥanīna				
				Rav Hūnā
Mar Zūṭrā				Zūṭrā
Hunamar				
Kafnai		Kafnai		Qafnai
Ḥanīnai	Hūnā	Hūnā		
Bustānai	Bustānī	Bustānī	Bustanai (Ḥanīna)	Bustanai
Ḥisdai	Ḥisdai	Barādoi	...	Ḥisdai
David	David	Ḥisdai	Ḥisdai	David
°Anan	°Anan	Solomon	Solomon	°Anan
Saul	Saul	Isaac	...	Saul
Josiah	Josiah	Yehuda	Barādoi	Daniel
Ṣemaḥ	Jehoshaphat	David	Boaz	°Anan
	Boaz	Yehuda		
	David	Zakkai	Zakkai	
	Solomon	Josiah	David	
	Hezekiah	Solomon	...	
		°Azariah	David	
		Zakkai	Nehemiah	
Joseph	...			
Zakkai				

Comparative table of lists

(6) Damascus ms. (Harkavy, Neubauer)	(7) Pinsker L.Q.	(8) Coronel	(9) Tripoli Bible	(10) Oxford Bodl. MS Heb f 40 (Neubauer)
		Hūnā	Hūnā	Hūnā Būstīnī
		Mar Zūtrā	Mar Zūtrā	Zūtrā
		Bar Hūnā	Hunamad	Hunāmad
Kafnai	Kafnā		Kafnai	Kafna
	Ḥanīna			
Bustānai	Bustānī	Bustānai	Bustānī	Bustānī
Ḥisdai	Ḥisda	Ḥisdai		Solomon
David	David	Solomon		Isqawai
Isaac (Isqawai)	°Anan	Yehuda		Yehuda
Yehuda (Zak- kai Bābōi Moses)	Saul	Yehuda		David
Isaac (Isqawai)	Josiah	David		Zakkai
David b. Ye- huda	Jehoshaphat	Yehuda		David
Ḥisdai	Boaz, et al.	Zakkai		
		Josiah		
		Solomon		
		°Azariah		
		Solomon, et al.		

(77) These lists of the exilarchs vary considerably and in many instances there are inconsistencies and even contradictions. Lazarus and Goode had earlier on attempted to reconstruct the sequence of exilarchs holding office during the geonic period. The following discussion, however, sets aside their conclusions which also differ from one another.

During the first generations, the exilarchate was apparently represented by Ḥisdai b. Bustanai and his descendants. All the genealogies mention him and note that ʿAnan, who was thought to be the founder of the Karaite sect, was his descendant. Sherira Gaon recalls in his *Letter*, that the gaon of Pumbedita, Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah (719), whose nickname was Bar Mar Yanqā, was related by marriage to the exilarch's family and was so despotic in his ways that the scholars of his yeshiva fled to Sura and remained there until he died. Sherira also informs us that in AD 730, the exilarch Solomon b. Ḥisdai, Bustanai's grandson, is said to have appointed Samuel, grandson of Rabbā (who was gaon of Pumbedita) as gaon in Sura. In 757, Solomon b. Ḥisdai is still exilarch when he appoints Judah b. Naḥman as Gaon of Sura.

In about 760, the exilarch Isaac, i.e. Isqawai, son of the above-mentioned Solomon, is mentioned in a list of exilarchs and he is also referred to in a responsum in connection with the release of slaves by word of mouth (by a deathbed will?) by one of the children of the *nāsī* (that is, of an exilarchic family) "whose name was Nathan b. Shahriār"; this Nathan evidently had no sons, for it states there that his heir was "Shemaiah son of ISAAC, EXILARCH". It should be noted that it was not Nathan who was exilarch, and that the exilarch referred to in that passage was presumably Isaac, i.e. Isaac b. Solomon b. Ḥisdai, who is called Isqawai in a geonic responsum from ca. 810: "... and this was how 'our Master' behaved with the widow of the exilarch ISQAWAI, whose sum in the *ketubba* was large, and his son, Hakaliah, came to the yeshiva and complained that 'I am not able to refund her *ketubbā*'", etc. ("our Master" here was the gaon Isaac b. Šādōq b. Jesse, in ca. 810. One may find the lengthy gap from 760 to 810 somewhat puzzling, for there is no explanation in the sources and thus it lends itself to all sorts of interpretations).

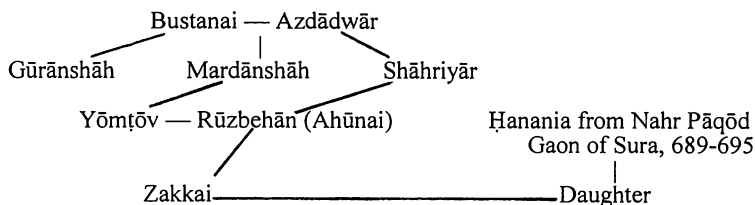
In the lists preserved by the Karaites, which refer essentially to the house of ʿAnan, David is mentioned in the continuation, as if he was an exilarch. It seems that he was actually the brother of the exilarch Solomon b. Ḥisdai, but was included in the lists because he was the father of both ʿAnan, and Ḥananiah, who was chosen as exilarch in preference to ʿAnan. All this occurred in the early sixties of the eighth century. And thus we apparently have an exilarch named Ḥananiah in that period.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ I am grateful to Dr. Y. Erder for his help in clarifying the problems of chronology related to these early exilarchs. See Lazarus and Goode (as in the previous note). Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah: Sherira, *Letter*, 102f.; cf. Malter, *Saadia*, 103; Solomon b. Ḥisdai, Sherira, *Letter*, 106, 107; cf. Rapoport, *Töledōt*, 50, and the revised reading proposed by Harkavy, *Resp.*, 357; see *ibid.*, no. 181 (p. 82): "...one says that this *halākhā* was also declared in the days of the exilarch Solomon b. Ḥisdai and of our Lord and Master Samuel Gaon, on a *shū-viā de-riḡlā* (a Saturday of reunion), before the exilarch". This is the Solomon the exilarch mentioned in *Sefer ha-pardes* (Warsaw 1869-70), no. 280 (=Budapest, 1923-24, 15); cf. Aptowitzer, *REJ*, 57 (1909): 245. The offspring of Bustanai: TS 8 G 1b, line 6. Solomon b. Ḥisdai is missing from the genealogical list of the Karaite *nesī'im*; Grätz has explained it

(78) From the geonic responsum which speaks of the Bustanai affair, we find that Bustanai had five sons—two (Baradai and Hisdai) by his Jewish wife, and the other three (Shahriār, Gūrānshāh, and Mardānshāh) by his Persian spouse. At the beginning of the eleventh century, the Palestinian gaon Josiah b. Aaron writes in one of his letters, that five of Bustanai's children were born to the "daughter of kings" and were "the sons of foreskin and shame while two of them were heirs to holiness". In the responsum of the Babylonian gaon, written somewhat earlier, it says that some of the Persian's descendants "reigned over" the yeshivot and some were exilarchs. One of the versions of the responsum even records that those who reigned were the children of Rūzbihān, son of Shahriār (one of the Persian's sons), and Bustanai's grandson, whose heirs would thus be Bustanai's great-grandsons. In that same responsum, it also states that one of these unnamed great-grandsons married "the daughter of Rav Hanīnai". In a version of that same responsum in *Sha'arē Sedeq*, "Hanīnai, Judge of the Gate" is mentioned, as being the one who wrote "the deed of release for that slave girl", implying that he was the first to legitimize the Persian wife's descendants, even going so far as to give his daughter in marriage to one of her great-grandsons. We still do not know who that Hanīnai was and whether he was the Judge of which Gate—of the exilarch or of one of the yeshivot. There are additional hints in the gaon's responsum that point to the possibility that Naṭrūnai Gaon (b. Hillai) was related to the family of the Persian's offspring (and therefore made decisions in their favor). We may assume on the basis of this kinship that it was this Hanīnai, "Judge of the Gate", who afterwards became gaon of Sura (689-694), and that Naṭrūnai b. Hillai was one of his daughter's descendants, that is, one is referring to Hananiah of Nahr Pāqōd, and it was his daughter who married Bustanai's great-grandson by his Persian wife (Hanīnai and Hananiah are obviously one and the same person), perhaps after the death of her father, the gaon, in 694.

It seems that the son of Rūzbihān (=Yōmtōv) who became exilarch (and perhaps some of his descendants also became exilarchs, for it is written: the sons of Rūzbihān), can be identified with Zakkai b. Ahūnai, as will be shown below.

according to the Karaite view that °Anan was the legitimate exilarch. Since °Anan was the son of David (Solomon's brother), they included David in their lists and omitted Solomon; see Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 437f. Nathan b. Shahriar: Bodl MS Heb c 18, f. 38; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I 144. See this responsum in Harkavy, *Teshuvot*, par. 389, p. 205 and see his comments *ad loc.*; see also *idem*, *MGWJ*, 32 (1883): 376. Lazarus, *JJGL*, 175, n. 1, refers to the killing of the exilarch ordered by the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad (744-750), mentioned by Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 166; this story, however, which is related in connection with the legend of the exilarch's magic mirror (mentioned above) seems entirely fanciful. Lewin assumed that the Isaac mentioned in an ancient *qaddish* (ENA 4053b) was Isaac (Isqawai) the exilarch, see *Ginzē qedem*, 2 (1922-23): 46. David b. Hisdai is also mentioned by the seventeenth century Karaite Mordechai b. Nissan in *Dod Mordekhai*, 42 (Hamburg) = 4b-5a (Vienna). Cf. Lazarus, *JJGL*, 174ff., who connected a seal inscription with the name Isaac b. Moses (ed. Mordtmann, *ZDMG*, 18 [1864], 51 no. ix) to another (presumed) exilarch by that name; there may be a trace of this individual in List 6 (= Harkavy, *Resp.*, 378). °Anan and Hananiah, the sons of David, see Pinsker, *Liq. qadm.*, II, 53, in the note; 103 (in the treatise of Elijah b. Abraham's *Ḥillūq ha-qārā'im we-ha-rabbānim*).

Conjectural Lineage

We find that this Zakkai (son of Ahūnai-Rūzbihān, the great-grandson of Bustanai's Persian wife, was involved in a serious dispute with Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai (other versions: Ḥavīvai, Zabīnai) over the exilarch's seat. On the basis of the identification of Ḥananiah with Ḥanīnai we find that Naṭrūnai, the exilarch, was the son of Ḥananiah (brother of ʿAnan) b. David. It was Mar Rav Malkā b. Mar Rav Aḥa, head of the Pumbedita yeshiva from 771 until his death in 773, who ousted Naṭrūnai from the exilarchate, after he had filled this role "for a few years". And this is what Sherira Gaon says about the matter in his *Letter*: "... (Rav Malkā) dismissed Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai the *nāsī* during the conflict over Zakkai b. Ahūnai, who had previously been *nāsī* for several years. The two yeshivot then convened with Zakkai the *nāsī* and dismissed him. Subsequently Rav Malkā went to Paradise and Naṭrūnai the *nāsī* went to the West". From the language of the letter it is difficult to discern who preceded whom in the office for several years previously—Malkā b. Aḥa or Naṭrūnai. The latter's dismissal made a considerable impression, for it was made at a joint meeting of the two yeshivot, with the participation of the appointed exilarch, Zakkai b. Ahūnai. According to the genealogy noted above, the Sura Gaon, who collaborated in the dismissal process, was none other than Zakkai b. Ahūnai's brother-in-law, Marī (b. Ḥananiah). There is little doubt, however, that while Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai stemmed from the 'legitimate' dynasty, i.e. the branch of Ḥisdai and ʿAnan, Zakkai b. Ahūnai was an offspring of the Persian wife, and he married the daughter of Ḥananiah. That is to say: a descendant of Ḥisdai was dismissed and replaced by a descendant of the Persian wife. It was said that after his dismissal, Naṭrūnai left Babylonia and "went to the West", i.e., to the Maghrib (North Africa or Spain) and not to Palestine, as some scholars interpreted this. In his *Sefer ha-ʿittīm*, Judah the Barcelonian refers to Naṭrūnai b. Ḥakīnai (!) as having "written the Talmud for the Andalusians from memory, and not from a written text....". And in his commentary to the *Sefer yeṣirā* he quotes "the well-known fact.... that Mar Naṭrūnai Gaon (!), of blessed memory, came to them (to Spain) from Babylonia via a miraculous journey (*gefiṣat ha-derekh*), spread knowledge, and returned....", quoted in a responsum of Hayy Gaon, who as we are aware, is known to have denied the possibility of such an exploit (*infra* sec. 233). Thus Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai was remembered in subsequent generations as an excellent scholar. Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai and his son who followed him as exilarch, are mentioned in the responsum ascribed to Ṣemaḥ b. Solomon, head of the *dayyānē de-vāvā de-marūtā*, i.e. the exilarch's *av-bēt-dīn* (chief justice). It seems that Ḥisdai assumed the role of exilarch (from which his

father had been dismissed), some time after AD 800, which is hinted at in the above-mentioned legendary passage from Hayy Gaon's responsum allegedly quoted by Judah the Barcelonian: "and he returned".

With regard to those changes and upheavals that occurred during the last quarter of the eighth century, there is ample justification for connecting developments within the Jewish world with what was happening outside it. This was the first generation after the Abbasid revolution, in which the still-surviving members of the Persian aristocracy enjoyed considerable prestige within the ruling circles. The influence and power of the Barmecides, members of the Persian elite who ruled in Khurāsān, were particularly effective. Khālīd b. Barmak was an active confederate in the Abbasid revolution and was the right-hand man of the first Abbasid caliphs, while his son, Yaḥyā, was Hārūn al Rashīd's vizier. All of which continued until the cruel and sudden elimination of the family in AD 803. Hence it is not unlikely that at the time, that is, until AD 803, his descent from the Persian princess was an advantage in paving the way for Zakkai b. Ahūnai to occupy the seat of the exilarch; while that after the annihilation of the Barmecides, the sons of the 'legitimate' descendants of Bustanai were restored to office, beginning with Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai. Against this background, there is also some justification for what was said in different versions of the gaon's responsum regarding a sort of collusion among the sages to keep the affair of the illegitimate lineage quiet, because the descendants of the Persian "relied on the rulers and authorities of the kingdom, for they were related to royalty, as their mother's brother had been a *marzubān*". The target of most of the sharp criticism in the gaon's responsum was (according to the version in *Shā'ārē sedeq*) the *geonim* of Sura and Pumbedita during the middle of the ninth century: Palṭoi b. Abayyē and Naṭrūnai b. Hillai; particularly the latter (according to the principal Geniza version). Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, that is Khalaf b. Sarjāda, gaon of Pumbedita some hundred years later, is also mentioned as being among those who supported that judgment. The original decision, however, in the versions of the gaon's responsum, rests on two people, on Ḥanīnai, "Judge of the Gate" (who, apparently, became gaon of Sura afterwards), and Samuel, head of the Pumbedita yeshiva during the middle of the eighth century. This is not the Mar Rav Samuel Gaon of Sura (Rabbā's grandson) who was appointed by the exilarch Solomon b. Ḥisdai in 730; as this Solomon belonged to the other faction, being one of the descendants of Bustanai's Jewish wife. From the timing, however, it seems that Samuel b. Rav Mar who became the gaon of Pumbedita in 748, on the eve of the Abbasid revolution, is intended here.

At approximately the same time, the affair of R. Aḥa of Shabhā, the author of the *She'iltōt*, was taking place. According to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, in his *Sefer ha-qabbālā*, Aḥa was the object of the exilarch's aversion and was therefore passed over for the role of gaon in favor of his assistant Naṭrūnai, and this was what led to Aḥa's emigration to Palestine. Ibn Da'ūd's account of these matters, however, relies entirely on Sherira's *Letter*, and describes R. Aḥa's emigration as if it was the outcome of the appointment of the *nāsī*. The text of the *Letter* is as follows: ".... In the day of Mar Rav Naṭrōy Kahānā b. Mar Rav Emūna (ca. 755), who was from Baghdad, from Tūtīra Bārā ('the external bridge'; see below, sec. 184), Mar Rav Aḥa emi-

grated from Shabḥa to Palestine, since Mar Rav Naṭrūnai was his pupil (?) and when he was appointed *nāsī* over them, he (Aḥa) emigrated there". At that time, the title *nāsī* referred exclusively to the exilarch (or a member of the exilarch's family). The person being referred to is evidently Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai, the dismissed exilarch, and not Naṭrōy Kahānā (Naṭrūnai in the version of the *Sefer ha-qabbālā*), head of the Pumbedita yeshiva. One possibility is that something was omitted from Sherira's *Letter*. Another is that when Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai was dismissed and went to the West, Aḥa also left Babylonia and went to Palestine. At any rate, it seems that the text may have various interpretations, not necessarily that of Ibn Da'ūd. One should also note that in the short passage in Sherira's *Letter*, one comes across the name Aḥa in two other places; as head of the Sura yeshiva for half a year in 756; and as the father of Malkā, gaon of Pumbedita (771-773). Whether or not these are all references to the same person remains uncertain.

From this point onward, we have little real information relating to the exilarchs, apart from some names in the genealogical lists which are outside the framework of this discussion. We do not know which exilarch dismissed the gaon of Pumbedita, Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Abraham in 786, as mentioned in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*. It may have been Zakkai b. Ahūnai or one of his offspring. At any rate, when we encounter further reliable information relating to the exilarchs, beginning in approximately 820, there is no longer any reference to the descendants of Bustanai from his Persian wife. The conflict between David and Daniel described below, in the next section, was a controversy between the descendants of Ḥisdai and Barādai, the two sons of Bustanai's Jewish wife. In 803, the year the Barmecides were annihilated, the descendants of the Persian wife may have been ousted as well. At the same time, Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai may have returned from the west and been granted the office of exilarch, but I must stress that this is mere conjecture.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ The children of Bustanai: 1; see the parallel version, TS 8 G 1; Josiah's letter: Gil, *Palest.*, II, no.29, lines 28-29; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933-34), 289f.; Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 196; Sherira, *Letter*, 104. Widengren, *Aufst. und Niederg.* II (9.1), 276, interprets the name Shahriar as the satrap of a *shahr*, which means a district; it seems to me that in Jewish sources Shahriar corresponds to Sherira. Nathan b. Shahriar (of the progeny of the *nesī'im*), see Bodl MS Heb c 18, f. 38r, and see the version presented by Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 83. Assaf, *Taq. ha-g.*, 31f., hastily solved the genealogical problems, and those of the order of the geonim by declaring them all offspring of the Persian princess; but this is only what the slanderous Arabic story from the Geniza argues, which is not reliable at all. The discharge of Naṭrūnai: Sherira, *Letter*, *ibid.*; it appears that the version there, "for several years previous", refers to Naṭrūnai, not to Malkā. Weiss, *Dör.*, IV, 29, interpreted the episode as a plot hatched by the heads of the yeshivot, who did not want an exilarch who was a scholar, so they succeeded in forcing Naṭrūnai to emigrate (to Palestine, which he understood to be "to the West"). Halevy, *Döröt*, III, 231, understood Sherira's statement differently; according to him it is Zakkai b. Ahūnai who was the exilarch, and Naṭrūnai who opposed. The two geonim thus acted properly in expelling the man who provoked the controversy. See the *Sefer ha-ittim* of Judah b. Barzilai of Barcelona, 267, and *idem*, *Pērūsh*, 103f. See Harkavy's correction in Grätz (Hebrew), iv, 8. See the responsum of Ṣemaḥ b. Solomon: Dukes, *Ben Chananya*, 4 (1861), 141f. (from an Oxford manuscript); cf. Harkavy, *Resp.*, 389; *Halākhōt gedōlōt* (Hildesheimer), 86, 188, 190 (mentions of Ṣemaḥ b. Solomon). Brüll, *JJGL*, 9 (1889), 116f., discussed this topic and found the correct interpretation of 'the West', which is: the Maghrib; he argues that whenever Sherira wanted to say Palestine he wrote: *Ereṣ isrā'ēl*; Brüll also assumed that the source of the animosity between Naṭrūnai and the geonim was the fact that the geonim objected to writing the Talmud, an

5. The crisis at the beginning of the ninth century

(79) There is no doubt that there was an obvious decline in the status accorded the exilarch during the Muslim period. In Sherira Gaon's *Letter* we find ample allusions to this. Some two hundred years later, we find further indications in one of Samuel b. Eli's letters. Sherira Gaon says in his *Letter*: "at the middle of the Islamic period, in the days of David b. Judah the *nāsī*, they (i.e. the exilarchs) were pushed aside by the royal authorities, so that the heads of Pumbedita would no longer go to them. On the contrary, when the *nesī'im* wished to hold a convention at Pumbedita, it was they (i.e. the exilarchs) who went thither to call (the convention)". In another passage in the continuation of the *Letter*, "the conflict between the *nesī'im* Daniel and David" is recalled. This dispute took place in the day of Abraham b. Sherira, gaon of Pumbedita, i.e. from 816-828. Indeed, in 987, when the *Letter* was being written, the 'Ishmaelites', i.e., the Muslim rulers, had been in power for some 340 years, and if we deduct half of this number, we arrive at approximately that period, that is, ca. 820. In the same vein, Samuel b. Eli, head of the Baghdad yeshiva, writes towards the end of the twelfth century:

And in the days of David b. Judah they (the exilarchs) were dismissed from the service of the Sultan and joined the sages and the yeshivot. They were received, however, only if they accepted the conditions of the yeshiva; for it was the yeshiva which authorized them (and gave them) certificates (of appointment) to serve as exilarchs. And some of the documents on them are in our keeping.

assumption justly refuted by Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 17. Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 20, decided for some reason that '*abarūh*, in Sherira's text, refers to Malkā, the head of the yeshiva, while Naṭrūnai must have been the addition of a copyist. Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 17, n. 2, also connected the story with what Ibn Ḥazm, *Milal*, I, 156, wrote about a Baghdadian Jew who came to Cordova (Qurṭuba; because of lack of knowledge printed in the *Milal*, as: قریطة) who was the subject of various fables, such as that he made horns grow on somebody's head. Ginzberg concludes that "there can be no doubt that this sage was Rabbi Naṭrūnai"; naturally there is no extant proof for such a connection between the two. Marx, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 770, tends to deny the whole idea that the Talmud was brought to Spain, based on the information found in 13, c, from line 8, that Paṭtoi Gaon b. Abayē (842-858) sent a Talmud with commentaries to Spain; but this argument sounds unacceptable as well, since an additional Talmud manuscript might have been sent there some 100 years after Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai. Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai is mentioned also in *Sefer ha-pardes* (ascribed to Rashi), 127; cf. Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 441. Another mention of him is perhaps found in Ashkenazi, *Ta'am zeqenim*, 56a: "as to the tradition of the people of France that you mentioned regarding our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai, perhaps a swindler happened to come among them, saying: I am Naṭrūnai", etc. As to the political circumstances, see the article al-Barāmika, in *EL*² (by W. Barthold and D. Sourdel). The matter of Aḥa of Shabḥā: Sherira, *Letter*, 103; Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, *The Book of Trad.*, 37 (Heb.), 47f. (Eng.). The discharge of Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Abraham Gaon: Sherira, *Letter*, 104. Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai is mentioned in Isaac b. Abbā Mari's *Sefer ha'itḥur* (1883), I, 53a: "...Ṣemah, chief judge of our Master Ḥisdai the exilarch, son of or Master Naṭrūnai the exilarch", etc. (the preamble to his responsum to Nathan b. Hananiah and the other scholars of Qayrawān); see also the Oxford manuscript, in: Dukes, *Ben Chananya*, 4 (1861), 142, beginning: "Ḥisdai the exilarch, son of our Master Naṭrūnai the exilarch, to our Master Nathan", etc. See also *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Yevāmōt*, 90, note d.; it appears that Ṣemah was carrying on his activity in the time of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, gaon of Sura (around the mid-ninth century).

This statement was apparently written in Siwan, Sel. 1502 (June 1191). Five months later (in Marheshwan 1503, i.e. in October 1191), Maimonides came to the defense of the exilarch against whom Samuel b. Eli had directed his attack (apparently David, the exilarch in Mosul after the death of Samuel, both of them descendants of Josiah b. Zakkai). In a letter addressed to Raḥba, Raqqa, and twelve other communities in Iraq and all the communities in Syria, Samuel b. Eli extols the yeshiva, comparing its role to that of Moses and noting that even King David sought the counsel of the sages of his day, such as Mephibosheth. Conversely, in the continuation, he is critical of the exilarch who he claimed lacked scholarly credentials and owed his appointment solely to political connections, while receiving his exalted position without Samuel's approval. The latter's criticism is in keeping with what we have learned of the exilarch's declining status. Apparently, he had recourse to Sherira's *Letter*, and uses it for his own purposes, employing some characteristic affirmations: "King David used to rely on the sages, the wise men of the yeshivot. He did not rely on his own knowledge and opinions, but 'asked for the advice of Mephibosheth'".⁷⁹

(80) Along similar lines is a passage from the (lost) chronicle of the Ya'qūbite patriarch of Baghdad, Dionysius of Tel Mahrē, describing the conflict between David and Daniel, whose contemporary he was. Only those parts of his chronicle have been preserved which Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus cited in their chronicles, and this passage in both texts has been preserved in an almost identical version:

Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus

Michael the Syrian (ca. 1179)

.... At that time, an order was issued by Ma'mūn that if ten people of any religion were to come together and desire to appoint a leader over themselves, no man should interfere, arguing, "if there are too many leaders, we will become weaker and we will be overcome"; we have gone down to him, therefore, in order to annul this law. Now (this practice) had spread among all the religions on account of the Jews' conflict over the exilarchate, for those in Tiberias had appointed a man called David, while those in Babylonia had appointed a man named Daniel from the 'Ananite sect that profanes Saturday and ob-

Bar Hebraeus (ca. 1270)

.... at that time, there was a quarrel between two Jews concerning the exilarch, for the people of Tiberias appointed a man named David and the people of Babylonia, a man named Daniel of the 'Ananite sect—those people who profane Saturday and observe Wednesday. And when they came before Ma'mūn, he ordered that if ten men of any religion were to meet and decide to appoint a head over them, whether Jew or Christian or Zoroastrian, they should not be interfered with.

⁷⁹ Sherira, *Letter*, 93, 111; in other versions we find David b. Zakkai, but in Lewin's 'French' version of the *Letter*, which is more reliable and generally identical with that of the Geniza fragments, it says: b. Judah. See the letter of Samuel b. Eli, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1929-30, second part), 62-70, and see Assaf's comments *ibid.* (first part), 126ff. Samuel b. Eli repeatedly stresses there that there is no need for an exilarch in the days of the exile since they only need someone to teach them the *halākhōt* and decide in their litigations, contrary to ancient times when a king was needed for the wars (although God was angry with the Children of Israel for having enthroned a king over them).

serves Wednesday. When their affair came before Ma'mūn, he decreed that each side should choose as its head whomever it pleased.

One can see that there are no significant differences between the two, except for the fact that the order of things has been reversed. Michael the Syrian, who is the earlier of the two, also treats the chronicle of Dyonisius, which was probably at hand, with greater respect, and preserved the passage in which Dionysius, then head of the Ya'qubites in the Abbasid caliphate, tells of having gone to a meeting with the caliph on the issue. There is no way of telling whether Bar Hebraeus cited the passage directly from Dionysius' chronicle or only summarized Michael the Syrian's version.

These events belong to the same period described by Sherira in his *Letter*, i.e. ca. 825. It is obvious that this was a dispute between two contenders to the role of exilarch, both of them belonging to the extensive family of *nesi'im*, as the families of the exilarchs were then called. The accepted opinion was that David b. Judah was the victor in this dispute, for we read in Sherira Gaon's *Letter* that in Sel. 1144 (832/3), it was David b. Judah who appointed Mar Rav Isaac Bar Mar Hūnā (Ḥananiah) gaon of Pumbedita. We shall learn, however, that it is more likely, that the rivalry continued at least until 834 and that each contender considered himself exilarch.

The Daniel involved in this dispute was most probably 'Anan's grandson—the same 'Anan who is considered the founder of Karaism. On this subject I have written elsewhere. Essentially, the sources indicate that the 'Ananite branch of the exilarchic family only joined the Karaites in the ninth century when Daniel b. Saul b. 'Anan and Daniel's son 'Anan II went over to the Karaites. It seems that during the same period, his brother Josiah b. Saul served as head of the Palestinian yeshiva, and the sons of this Josiah, 'Anan II's cousins, Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ, undoubtedly served in this capacity afterwards.

Mann believed that it was unlikely that this Daniel stemmed from the family of 'Anan (or as he puts it: from the Karaites), for the sages of Pumbedita would not have supported a Karaite. In other words, he maintained that Daniel the grandson of 'Anan, and Daniel the contender for the role of exilarch, were two different people. Mann's conclusion, however, cannot withstand the criticism directed against it, in the light of what we know today of the family and its status. In 'Anan's time, the family was already notorious for having dissident tendencies and this is shown by what Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, gaon of Sura (ca. 860) says about "those *minim* (heretics) who deride and mock the words of our sages, of blessed memory", calling them "the disciples of 'Anan, may his name rot, and of Daniel's father's father, the triple thread of meanness and heresy" (the triple thread being 'Anan, Saul, and Daniel). All of which basically reflects the animosity towards the house of 'Anan. Anyone studying the considerable documentary material which has accumulated around the various disputes of that period, would be aware that one should relate to the accusations and slander in the letters *cum grano salis*. Thus we see this branch of the exilarchic family, the house of 'Anan, slandered and defamed in Babylonia, while in Palestine it occupies the ranks of leadership. A fraction of the

slander against this family also managed to penetrate the above-mentioned Syriac source (Dionysius—Michael the Syrian—Bar Hebraeus), for it says there that the ʿAnanites profane the Saturday and observe Wednesday as a holy day. This information has nothing to support it even if we would assume that ʿAnan and his offspring were already Karaites, which is not the case, as we have no knowledge of anything of the sort about the Karaites. According to Qirqisānī, Yūdghān, the leader of one of the dissenting sects, was the one who had abolished the sabbath, and there were, according to Qirqisānī, Karaites who also agreed with Yūdghān on this matter. We do not know the precise dates when referring to Yūdghān; but from Qirqisānī's account, he seems to have been a contemporary of ʿAnan b. David, i.e. he lived in the middle of the eighth century.

As to the holiness of Wednesday, we find in Bīrūnī that it was the 'Maghāriyya' (the sect of the caves) who sanctified the Wednesday, the day on which "the lights in the firmament" were created. A great deal has been written on the subject in various present-day studies which connect this with the Qumrān sect. Immediately afterwards, in the continuation, Bīrūnī writes about the ʿAnanites things which he ascribes to Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq, in his book *al-maḡālāt* ('the tracts'), which dealt with the various sects. Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq wrote during the first half of the ninth century, when the chronicle of Dionysius of Tel Mahrē may have been at his disposal and he probably misread *maghāriyya* for *ʿanāniyya*, owing to their proximity in the chronicle. In his book on religions and sects, Shahrastānī also explains that the ʿAnanites disagree with the rest of the Jews; but he also writes other things on the issue of the sabbath which are quite improbable.

We also have another responsum from Naṭrūnai Gaon about *mīnīm* (heretics) "who ridicule the Jews" etc., and further on, he says of them "...they do not observe the precept of preserving the Sabbath"; but Daniel is not mentioned in this responsum. (I shall return to the subject below in the chapter on the sects.) The modicum of information in the Syriac source is that Daniel was one of the ʿAnanites, and it is quite obvious that he was ʿAnan b. David's grandson. Members of this family were then the leaders in the Palestinian yeshiva and it is more than likely that support for Daniel came from Palestine and that it was the Babylonians who rooted for David b. Judah. It is also difficult to conceive that someone whom the Babylonians were opposed to, would turn out to be the victor and occupy this leading role; after all it is Babylonia which was the place of the exilarchate. Thus it seems most likely that the Syriac source (or copyist) was mistaken when stating that the Babylonians supported Daniel while "the people of Tiberias", i.e. the Palestinians, supported David.

The most impressive confirmation of what the sources say about this dispute centering on the exilarchy, we find in a Geniza letter apparently written by one of the Pumbedita personalities. The name of the writer has not been preserved, nor is the date available, but one suspects that the writer of the letter was Hayy b. David, who later became gaon of Pumbedita and that its date would then be ca. 850. The letter is addressed to the people of Qayrawān and it bears the name of one of them, Judah b. Saul. The writer boasts about the large number of sages who sit in the "first row" of the yeshiva, while Sura can claim barely a quarter of this number. Moreover—he adds—half the Sura yeshiva supports Daniel of the house of

°Anan, from the lineage of the *nāsī* Ḥisdai (in contrast to David b. Judah, who, it is implied, stemmed from the lineage of Barādai, the other son of Bustanai's Jewish wife). Hence it is quite clear that the Babylonians, that is, the people from Pumbedita and a good number from Sura, markedly supported David b. Judah. This letter must have been written after David's victory, when Sar Shālōm b. Boaz was Gaon of Sura. Several years later, as we have seen, Naṭrūnai b. Hillai (whose term of office as gaon apparently began in 853), actively opposed Daniel and accused him and his followers of heresy.

As we learn from the Geniza, David's victory was no small matter, and it actually meant that Daniel was dismissed from the office of exilarch. A refugee from Ramla who had moved to Baghdad some twenty years earlier and writes from there in approximately 1095, recalls his visits to the graves of the sages and heads of the yeshivot buried there in al-Anbār (evidently meaning Pumbedita) "on the mountain", and also mentions Daniel's grave, who he says was the exilarch in the days of al-Ma'mūn. Perhaps either each faction proclaimed its own candidate exilarch or that indeed one of them was ousted from office.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ See Michael the Syrian, 517 (transl.: III, 65); Bar Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccl.*, I, 366. (I am very grateful to Prof. G. Goldenberg for suggesting several important corrections in the reading and translation of these Syriac fragments.) The passage is related to the account of the Baghdadian Bishop Lazarus' dissension. The Bishop was discharged and put under a ban; whereas he nevertheless claimed to have rights for the status based on the above-mentioned decision of the caliph. The patriarch approached the caliph, who argued that his decision was the result of problems that appeared among the Jews; on the other hand, he insisted that he himself had no ambition to impose a leader upon the people. The patriarch claimed that such an approach contradicts the accords between Muslims and Christians, stipulating that nothing of the Christian forefathers' laws be changed. This encounter took place in the month of Adar (March) 829; while, obviously, the controversy among the Jews occurred some years earlier. After the discussion, al-Ma'mūn entrusted the *qāḍī* Ishāq to inquire into the matter. The *qāḍī* Ishāq, who was Ishāq b. Ibrahim al-Mawṣilī, was in charge of the markets; he died in AH 235, AD 849/50. See Dhahabī, *ʿIbar*, II, 420. The appointment of Isaac b. Hūnā Sherira, *Letter*, 112; see on the matter of the *nesī'im* from among °Anan's descendants: Gil, *Hist.*, 790-794; on Jehoshaphat and Šemah: *ibid.*, 657-660. See Mann's view: *Texts*, II, 129f. Markon, in *Schäfer Jub. Vol.*, 130ff., denied the very fact that °Anan had a grandson named Daniel, and in his view the competitor for the see of the exilarch was the Daniel mentioned in Naṭrūnai Gaon's responsum, see the responsum in *Seder Rav °Amram*, I, 207. Yūdghān: Qirqisānī, 53, 876, and see *ibid.*, 13: After Yūdghān came °Anan, the exilarch; Shahrastānī, 127; see *Ōsar ha-g. to Yevāmōt*, 113, par. 262, the text of a query, and a responsum ascribed to Naṭrūnai Gaon, about heretics who do not observe the Sabbath. See also, in Poznanski, *JQR*, 10 (1898), 261-274, a two-page Oxford manuscript, Bodl MS Heb 451, which he ascribes to Saadia Gaon. In that manuscript a sect (probably a Karaite fraction) is mentioned whose members do not accept *lō be-dū* for Nisan (the avoidance of the first of Nisan, and the first of the Passover falling on *beth, daleth*, and *waw*, i.e., on Monday, Wednesday and Friday), see *ibid.*, 263; this is perhaps why they contended that the first of Nisan (probably like Rosh Hashana as well) must fall on a Wednesday. On the sanctity of Wednesday: Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 284; Burāqī, 53, cites a Shiite tradition from Ibn Ta'ūs' *Maṣābiḥ al-zā'ir*, maintaining that whoever wants to go for prayer in the mosque al-Sahla (ascribed to Idri, who is Enoch, which points to Manichaeism) should preferably do it on a Wednesday night, which is the best time; see on al-Sahla: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 205; cf. Gil, *JOS*, 12 (1992), 37 n. 76. See in Poznanski, *REJ*, 50 (1905), 16ff., a Geniza fragment first published by Harkavy in 1900, where a certain ... l al-Maṭarī is mentioned, who claimed that the Sabbath should be observed on Tuesday, in which case the week would have to begin on Wednesday. The letter from Pumbedita: 4. The letter of the refugee: 86, a, line 11. Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 444 n. 1, meant to find in Bar Hebraeus' text a mistake, namely that instead of *ṭabarāyē*, what should be read there is *anbarāyē*, i.e. people of al-Anbār,

(81) In the light of what has been said above, we must re-examine the exilarch's letter which was identified and published by Mann. This is a letter written in Aramaic which deals with the calendar order for the year Sel. 1147 (835/6), in which the exilarch states that on matters of intercalation, he and the heads of the yeshivot rely on the sages of Palestine. It is very likely that the letter was written a year before the above-mentioned year, i.e. in Sel. 1146, AD 834/5. Mann attributed the letter to David b. Judah, 'the victor', who in his opinion, collaborated with the Jewish leadership in Palestine. However, the letter may have rather been the work of Daniel (son of Saul b. °Anan), written when his brother Josiah and his nephews Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ were heads of the yeshiva in Palestine and he was in the midst of his differences with David b. Judah, as described above. (What we know with certainty from the sources is that the Palestinian yeshiva has been under the leadership of Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ, the sons of Josiah; Josiah himself might have been head of the yeshiva before them; but this is merely an assumption.) If this was indeed the case, the exilarch's adherence to the principles of the Jewish calendar (i.e. that Passover should not fall on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday) is in contradiction to the Syriac source (Dionysius), according to which Daniel and the °Ananite sect were observing Wednesday rather than Saturday.

As long as the family of °Anan controlled both the Palestinian yeshiva and the Babylonian exilarchate, Palestine continued to enjoy its traditional supremacy in all calendrical matters. When this family was deprived of the role of gaon in Palestine, however, the dissension between the two centers became acute. Matters reached a head with the great calendar controversy between the family of Meir Gaon of Palestine and Saadia b. Joseph, gaon of Sura.

At this juncture, we can sum up the events described above and conclude that the decline of the exilarch's status and the dispute between David and Daniel are undoubtedly interlaced. The decline of the exilarchate had

which was Firūz Shabūr, names for Neharde'a and Pumbedita in the geonic sources, not "people of Tiberias". Therefore, in Grätz's opinion, what the Syriac text really meant was that, in his opinion, the Pumbeditans supported David the Rabbanite, whereas the 'Babylonians' supported Daniel who, according to Grätz, leaned toward Karaism. The crucial question is: who were those Babylonians who supported a Karaite *nāsī*? A question which forced Grätz to resort to the assumption that they were perhaps Baghdadian Jews or perhaps the inhabitants of Sura and its surroundings. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 13, still adhered to Grätz's view, assuming that the Syriac source was referring to Pumbedita; *ibid.*, note 4, Abramson adds that it is not plausible that people of Palestine (Tiberias) would have supported (as Abramson puts it) a Karaite *nāsī*; however, the Syriac source runs vice-versa (and in my opinion, as noted above, it was wrong in this matter): that the Palestinians (Tiberias) were those who supported David b. Judah. The essence of Abramson's view: it was a conflict between the two Babylonian yeshivot. I assume that, had Grätz known the Geniza sources on Palestine and its yeshiva, or even had he known only the parallel, more detailed fragment of Michael the Syrian, he would not have written as he did. Grossman, *Rāshūt*, 64, still thinks that there is no way to decide who of the two—Grätz (*anbārāyē*) or the source (*tabarāyē*)—is right. Lazarus, *MGWJ*, 78 (1934), 281f., has already shown that, in the light of the Geniza findings, there is no room for Grätz's correction. Rosenthal, *Shenaton*, 11-12 (1984-86), 590, concluded that David and Daniel were both *nesī'im*, from what Sherira wrote in his *Letter* about the "conflict between Daniel and David b. Judah, the *nesī'im*"; but it should be remembered that those ancient people would call *nāsī* not only the exilarch, but also any man of his considerable family. However, the fact seems correct that both were exilarchs, competing with each other, as I showed above.

both internal and external aspects; while the heads of the yeshivot exercised greater authority internally, al-Ma'mūn's decree provided legitimacy to schismatic groups. We may assume that the decree encouraged religious dissent among the Jews, our knowledge of which is focused on the Karaites. Hence we can assume then how both the Jewish sources, i.e. Sherira Gaon's *Letter* and the letters of Samuel b. Eli, and the Syriac source, enabled us to understand the profound public crisis that engulfed the Diaspora during the first half of the ninth century. Undoubtedly, these conditions were also confirmed by what al-Jāhīz, a contemporary, wrote about the reduced prerogatives of the exilarch.⁸¹

6. *The exilarchs in the tenth and eleventh centuries*

(82) We are completely in the dark with regard to the exilarchs of the ninth century. Somewhere towards the end of the century we encounter the figure of the exilarch °Uqbā. Both he and David b. Zakkai, the exilarch who succeeded him, undoubtedly stemmed from the dynasty of David b. Judah, who, as we have seen, prevailed over Daniel b. Saul, who belonged to the dynasty of °Anan I and °Anan II, that is, the *nesī'im* whom the Karaites adopted. According to the genealogical lists in the table above, it is obvious that the members of the dynasty which remained Rabbanites, were also from the offspring of Hisdai and not from those of Barādai b. Bustanai, as some of them evidently tried to establish in Daniel b. °Azariah's day. The subject of °Uqba and David b. Zakkai is part of a separate discussion, which deals with the disputes during the tenth century (below, secs. 137-147). David b. Zakkai died in 940 (two years before Saadia Gaon). Nathan the Babylonian informs us that David's son Judah died after occupying the role of exilarch for only seven months. His son Hezekiah died at the age of twelve, and thus the role of exilarch went to distant relatives, "the sons of Hēmān", who hailed from Nisibis (no one seems able to say whether there is any particular significance to the name Hēmān or whether this was an ordinary name as found in the Bible). He is perhaps Hēmān b. Ḥanamēl, the *nāsī*, whose name or that of his descendants, was found engraved on a seal inscription. This family's candidate for the exilarchate was accused of cursing the Prophet of Islam, and was executed. For the descendants of Zakkai, this was a particularly critical time and the crisis became even more acute towards the latter half of the century, for reasons unknown to us, which may have been the plague or persecution, for Sherira Gaon writes in his *Letter* in 987: "of the family of the *nesī'im*, there now remains but one little child". However there is another version, dealing with Sura (Mātā

⁸¹ See Mann, *Jews*, I, 52f.; II, 41, where he printed 3; see Gil, *Hist.*, 566f. See on the significance of the events also Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 360; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 16f., published 4, a letter in which the name of the writer is missing, and only his father's name, David, is preserved; he assumed that the writer was Judah (son of David b. Judah), who he believed was exilarch as well. Indeed the name Judah b. David b. Judah is found in one of our lists of exilarchs (Dropsie 462, above in the table, list no. 3, see *supra*, sec. 76). Considering the fact that Ahī (Ahā) b. Mar Rav is still called there *aliif*, Abramson (*ibid.*, 10) concluded that the letter was written before 857, when Ahī was already Gaon; his assumption is a possibility, but not a certainty; it is more plausible that the writer was Hayy b. David.

Maḥsiyya), meaning that but one child of the entire family remained in Sura. A third version states that not even a single child of the *nesī'im* remained; but this is rather illogical.

In the mid-tenth century, Solomon b. Josiah (the brother of David) b. Zakkai, assumed the exilarchate. Solomon b. Josiah is mentioned in a letter from the Pumbedita yeshiva, dated 953, in which it states that he already filled the role of exilarch some two years previously, that is, in 951, and he is also mentioned in the genealogical list from the Geniza. He was followed by his son 'Azariah. The opening of a letter from 'Azariah is preserved in the Geniza but it is almost completely illegible although it can be reconstructed as follows: "... [°Azariah Exilarch] of all Israel b. Solomon b. Josiah Exilarch of all Israel".

For some unknown reason, the exilarchate was transferred from the descendants of Josiah to another branch, the descendants of David. As we know, 'Azariah's son Daniel became head of the Palestinian yeshiva in 1052 and was granted the titles of *nāsī* and *gaon*. After the office had passed out of the hands of David b. Zakkai's descendants—apparently in the days of Hezekiah I b. Judah—it reverted to this branch of the family when Hezekiah II became the exilarch.⁸²

(83) According to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, "the members of Rav Hayy's yeshiva" appointed Hezekiah to Hayy's seat after the latter's death on March 29th, 1038. Two years later, Hezekiah was denounced by 'informers' to the 'king' (that is the caliph or the ruler, and it is not clear whether this occurred under Būyid or already under Saljūq rule, i.e. before or after 1055. At any rate, we can assume that the "two years" in this version is inaccurate), who imprisoned him, put him in chains, tortured him grievously, and left him without a soul, "not even a dog". His two sons fled to Spain, Ibn Da'ūd continues, "to R. Joseph ha-Levi the Nagid b. R. Samuel the Nagid, who had great affection for Hezekiah" (after this, Ibn Da'ūd

⁸² Nathan the Babylonian, in: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 82f. Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 18f. Heymān b. Ḥanamel: Shaked, *Wiet Mem. Vol.*, 25; Sherira, *Letter*, 93, and see there the numerous versions; we shall never know which is the correct one, but as a matter of course there are here echo and evidence of the difficult crisis which then befell the exilarchic house. See the mention of Solomon b. Josiah, 13, f, line 8; 70, line 14; 'Azariah b. Solomon: Dropsie 462, printed in Halper, *Catalogue*, under that number. 'Azariah: Mosseri Ia, 19 (L 289); on its *verso* one can still read the name of the addressee's father: "our Master Ḥusayn, of blessed memory". See Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 20; on Daniel b. 'Azariah and his son David, see: Gil, *Hist.*, 719-724, 750-774. Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 21, alleged that Zakkai, the other son of 'Azariah, had settled in Mosul, and that opinion was accepted by others as well; but Mann was mistaken on this point, see Gil, *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/91), 302. 'Azariah had yet another son, a third one; he and his progeny called themselves *nesī'im*, and they lived in Ḥalab, and there is mention of them even in the fourteenth century, see Mann, *ibid.* See the genealogy on the *verso* of MS Heidelberg no. 10 (whose *recto* was edited), see no. 27 in Gil, *Palest.*, II, 44f., and see there more references. As Mann writes, *ibid.*, we do not know who was the exilarch who preceded 'Uqbā; but one has to heed what Nathan the Babylonian said (Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 79), that in his stead 'Uqbā's cousin, David b. Zakkai, was appointed, and we may assume that before him it is the anonymous father of 'Uqbā who was exilarch, the brother of Zakkai. Mann erred when he wrote there that Hezekiah II called his father David exilarch, even though he was not, see the above-mentioned genealogy; the name of that David is not accompanied by the initials *resh gimmel* (*rōsh gōlā*, exilarch). The refugee of Ramla, who visited the graves of the talmudic sages and the yeshiva heads, in al-Anbār, saw the tombs of "Exilarch Hezekiah and his father David, the *nāsī'*", which shows that David was not an exilarch. See 86, line 11.

switches to the singular). He remained there (that is, one of his sons, one may assume) until the massacre in Granada, when the Nagid was killed (December 30, 1066). He then fled to the land of Saragossa where he married and had children. Afterwards his grandsons migrated to the land of Edom (Christian Spain apparently). One of his offspring (the last?), was R. Ḥiyyā b. al-Da'ūdī (from the exilarch's family, from the House of David) who passed away in Castile in 1154.

This is the extent of the information supplied by Ibn Da'ūd on the subject, which generated many questions and many scholars have already dealt with it, as we shall see below. We can find further information about the exilarch Hezekiah from the texts in the Geniza; the earliest being from the beginning of February in Hayy Gaon's letter to Elḥanan b. Shemariah. The gaon refers there to a letter which he wrote to the exilarch, evidently referring to Hezekiah. In a letter dated Nisan Sel. 1322 (1021; the month of Nisan began on March 18th that year), Hezekiah's genealogy can be traced: Zakkai-David-Judah-Hezekiah-David-Hezekiah. In this genealogy Zakkai, David, Hezekiah I, and Hezekiah II, are the ones styled exilarchs.

In July 1036, Hezekiah writes to an unknown addressee, asking that queries be addressed to him, intending mainly in matters of the Bible, particularly the books of the Prophets and also in talmudic matters, for he would like to see the ties between them strengthened. On the 12th of September 1038, we learn from a letter of Daniel b. 'Azariah about Hezekiah's close ties to the Jews of Fustat. Two and a half years later, we encounter another letter from Hezekiah written in July or August of 1040, from which we understand the extent of his warm relationship with the 'Babylonians' in Fustat. He demands that they obey their leader Sahlān b. Abraham in every possible way. The letter also contains praise for Abū Naṣr, who is Ḥesed al-Tustarī, and the language of the letter implies that this wealthy Karaite, who was close to the rulers, helped to release some prisoners, arrested for reasons remaining unknown to us. He also mentions his cousin (Daniel b. 'Azariah?), from whom he learned something which annoyed him; but it is difficult to tell whether his reaction is genuine or dissembled: money which the community send him, i.e. to Hezekiah, is taken from the *heqdēsh* of the needy. Hezekiah warns the community that this is not right and that they should send money to him only from the usual sources of the *akhmās* (the 'fifths', meaning probably the regular payments to the community, such as for ritual slaughtering, or donations, the income from the court and its clerks, etc.). In the letter there is both praise and criticism, as well as mention of disasters interspersed with biblical and talmudic quotations. Although we have no specific references to the dispute between the gaon Solomon b. Judah and his rival Nathan b. Abraham, one can assume that this conflict was probably what motivated Hezekiah's remarks, as we are aware that the 'Babylonians' in Fustat sided with Nathan b. Abraham, who was also supported by their leader, the above-mentioned Sahlān, and the Karaite Tustari brothers, of whom the eldest is mentioned by name. Another fragment of a letter from Hezekiah to the nagid of Qayrawān, Jacob b. 'Amram, in the same year (1040), extolls the nagid in florid terms for supporting the scholars. It appears from what Hezekiah writes, that the nagid of Qayrawān was involved in matters of political significance, and close to

the ruler and his courtiers, all of which is confirmed by other sources as well (below, sec. 127).⁸³

(84) There is also mention of Hezekiah in another Geniza letter. The writer, Elijah *bēt dīn* (i.e. a local judge), b. Abraham, writes to the leader of the Jewish community of Ḥalab, Jacob *he-hāvēr be-sanhedrīn gedōlā* (member of the great Sanhedrin) b. Joseph, who as his title indicates, was trusted by the Palestinian *rāshūt*. The writer's son 'Amram is also recalled there, having added his greetings in his own handwriting. "The elders of the three communities who sit with us at the Gate of our Court" were also referred to as well as the "two scholars who came from Ḥalab from the land of Edom" (evidently Byzantium) to the writer's place to study "Mishnā and Talmud" and whose names were Karmī and Judah. Greetings are sent to the dignitaries of Ḥalab: Sa'dēl, "head of the communities", Ḥayyān, Yefet and Mevorakh, sons of Sa'dēl, Yeshū'a b. Jonah, Caleb, and also "the teachers, cantors, *parnāsīm* and *gabbā'im* and all those who deal with the needs of the community and all the elders and merchants' attorneys.... and all the communities in Šōvā (which is Ḥalab)—from the oldest to the youngest". It is obvious that this is a letter from someone who was a genuine leader in his community, its judge. From the text on the margins of the letter, we learn that its writer was a judge who lived five days journey from Baghdad, possibly in Raqqa on the Euphrates. A certain Benjamin ha-Kohen and others, told the heads of the yeshivot in Baghdad that the writer of the letter had settled there, and they sent him a writ of appointment, and only recently he received "renewed writs of appointment sent through Ezekiel the Babylonian, by.... our Master Hezekiah exilarch of all of Israel", and also by "*Rabbēnū* Rav Hayy, head of the yeshiva". One may infer, on the basis of this passage, that with R. Hayy's take-over of the position of gaon in place of his father in 1004, a new writ of appointment was required. At the same time, we may also conclude that about the same time, Hezekiah rose to the office of exilarch. Like a kind of crown around his signature, the writer once cites his title: "appointee of the Gate of the *nesī'ūt* (i.e. of the exilarch) and the yeshivot *shelgōlā* ('of the Diaspora')".

Another reference to Hezekiah the exilarch can be found in the Arabic passages interspersed in Samuel ha-Nagid's *dīwān*. Following the description of a military victory in 1055 in which the Nagid took part: ".... and Hezekiah the exilarch wrote to Mar Rav Isaac....". If there is no error in the version (such as: it should be read: "he [i.e., the Nagid] wrote to Mar Rav Isaac and to Hezekiah") the intention here is: the exilarch wrote words of

⁸³ See Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Tradition*, 44-57; Hayy Gaon's letter: 39, lines 3-4; the letter of 1021: MS Heidelberg no. 10v (see the preceding note). This letter is in fact a draft, written by Hezekiah himself or by his scribe, in which he expresses his opposition to Elḥanan b. Shemariah; see on this matter: Gil, *Hist.*, 546f.; it is a sheet from a quire. The letter of 1036: 67; the letter of 1040: 68; to the nagid of Qayrawān: 69. Daniel b. 'Azariah, a scion of the exilarchic family, who was to become gaon in Palestine, wrote, on 12 September 1038, to the leader of the 'Babylonians' in Fustat, Sahlān b. Abraham, on a prolonged dispute going on in his community, and notes that he has contacts, on this matter, with "our *nāsī* the exilarch", mentioning the ties (known to us) of this exilarch, i.e. Hezekiah, with the community and with Abū Naṣr (=Ḥesed) al-Tustarī, see Gil, *Palest.*, II, no. 344 (pp. 627-630).

praise and flattery to R. Isaac. And there follows a poem extolling the exilarch Hezekiah and his office.⁸⁴

(85) In a manuscript of *Seder 'olām zūfā* and *Seder tannā'im wa-amōrā'im* which was copied by a certain Jerahmeel, who evidently lived in southern Italy, he added: "After Rav Hayy, no head of the yeshiva was appointed in Babylonia; (they did) however (appoint) an exilarch by the name of R. Hezekiah who is now head and who stems from the house of David". In the continuation, he also mentions Hezekiah's son David, as well as Solomon b. Judah, gaon of Palestine, and also the date: the 15th of Elul, and the year according to the three eras: of the creation, of the destruction of the Temple, and the Seleucid, all of them being AD 1045. Thus we learn that Hezekiah still functioned as exilarch in the summer of that year, that is, in 1045. This also conforms to Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Tradition*, and it seems that it is from here that Ibn Da'ūd derived this information (some 120 years later). However, if we study the information carefully, we find that it does not convey what Ibn Da'ūd understood it to mean; Jerahmeel intended to say that, at the time he was writing, in the leadership of the Babylonian diaspora there was only the exilarch, and there was no head of the yeshiva (in Pumbedita—he ignores Sura altogether). Indeed, there is nothing in Hezekiah's or his contemporaries' Geniza letters, to corroborate the fact that after the death of Hayy Gaon, Hezekiah, beside being the exilarch, was also the head of the yeshiva; also in the *Sefer ha-sheṭārōt* of Judah of Barcelona there is a passage saying that after the death of Hayy Gaon a certain query was addressed to Hezekiah the exilarch; but in this there is no proof either that Hezekiah became head of the yeshiva.

The remainder of Ibn Da'ūd's information relating to Hezekiah, about his arrest and the flight of his sons to Spain, is also problematic. It has already been suggested that where it is written "two (*bēt*) years" one must assume that this is a copyist's error and should be read "twelve (*yōd bēt*) years", or "twenty (*kaf*) years". If it was Ibn Da'ūd's intention to say that Hezekiah was arrested two years after his appointment—this clearly does not correspond to what we now know. Even if it was 20 years, we have the evidence I cited above—that Hezekiah served more than 37 years (1018-1055). If we assume that he meant that the repeated persecution occurred during a number of years after the death of Rav Hayy Gaon (1038), he still remained in office for at least another 17 years. As to the flight of Hezekiah's sons to Joseph the nagid in Spain, this is also very questionable, since Joseph only became nagid after his father, Samuel, died, i.e. in 1055.

To sum up this chapter, the following is a tentative list of the exilarchs about whom we have information from the sources (or have made based

⁸⁴ See 73 and cf. Schechter, *Berliner Jub. Vol.*, 108ff.; Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 1ff.; Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 22; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 179. On Joseph b. Jacob of Halab, see Gil, *Hist.*, 188. See also, Kamenetzki, *REJ*, 55 (1908), 51 ff. See the *diwān*: ENA 1731, f. 9; the first to have cited it: Marmorstein, *REJ*, 68 (1914), 41f.; the preamble in Judaeo-Arabic which mentions Hezekiah is extant also in the nagid's poems, printed by Marcus, *Mizrah u-ma'arav*, 4 (1929/30), 313 (with faults, without translation); see the *diwān* of Samuel ha-nagid, ed. Yarden, 134 (where it should be corrected: *wa-shuhida*, instead of *wa-shuhira*). Marmorstein, *ibid.*, as also Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 36, understood that the intention there is a reference to an exilarch called Isaac Hezekiah, the result of misunderstanding the Arabic there. Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 22, only noted that the matter needs revision (and there is a misprint in the reference to *REJ* 68).

assumptions) who served in this function until the end of the eleventh century or thereabouts. We do not have precise dates noting the beginning of their status as exilarch:

1. Bustanai b. Kafnai, in the first half of the 7th century
2. Ḥisdai b. Bustanai, in the latter half of the 7th century
3. Solomon b. Ḥisdai, mentioned in 730 and 757
4. Isaac b. Solomon, ca. 760
5. Ḥananiah (°Anan's brother) b. David, ca. 762
6. Naṭrūnai b. Ḥananiah, until ca. 770
7. Zakkai b. Ahūnai, from ca. 770 until ca. 803
8. Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai, after ca. 803
9. Daniel b. Saul b. °Anan, ca. 820
10. David b. Judah, probably in the 30's of the ninth century
11. Judah (Zakkai) b. David b. Judah, ca. 840
12. °Uqbā, until ca. 908
13. David b. Zakkai, ca. 915 until 940
14. Judah b. David b. Zakkai, 940
15. Hezekiah I b. Judah b. David b. Zakkai, from ca. 941
16. Solomon b. Josiah b. Zakkai, mentioned in 951
17. °Azariah b. Solomon b. Josiah, ca. 975
18. Hezekiah II b. David b. Hezekiah, ca. 1000 until ca. 1060⁸⁵

⁸⁵ See the Jerahmeel MS, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 178, and see Neubauer's comments, p. xxi. AM 4807, which is printed there, is probably a misprint and should be 4805. The matter of Hezekiah's 'gaonate' was discussed by me: Gil, *Hist.*, pp. 541f. and n. 46. On Ibn Da'ūd's account, see also: Bacher, *JQR*, 15 (1902/3), 80, who saw a perfect confirmation of that account in the above mentioned Jerahmeel MS, namely that Hezekiah became gaon as well, without noticing that Ibn Da'ūd relied on that same manuscript. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 2f. understood Ibn Da'ūd's account to mean that Hezekiah was yeshiva head, but not gaon, which is totally unthinkable. On Ibn Da'ūd's account see also Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 22f., with additional references. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 17: Ezekiah did not have the title gaon, he only acted as gaon and sent responsa to queries. Grossman, *Rāshūt*, 11: Ezekiah was both exilarch and gaon. See Judah b. Barzilai of Barcelona, *Sefer ha-Sheṭ*, 87; Ezekiah was buried in al-Anbār (Pumbedita?), see the letter of the Ramla refugee, writing from Baghdad, who includes his tomb along with the graves of the sages of the Talmud and heads of yeshivot buried there, "on the mountain", see 86, and n. 83 above. See on Ezekiah also: Ben Jacob, *Yehūdē bavel*, 10. See the memorial list: ENA 2592, fs. 6-7, ed. Mann, *Jews*, II, 100, where there is mention of "...Hezekiah, exilarch of all Israel... and his son, our Lord and Master David, the *nāsī* of all the diasporas of Israel" (that list was made after the end of the eleventh century, as Nissim b. Nehorai b. Nissim is mentioned among the deceased [see *infra*, sec. 393]). For the date of Samuel, the Spanish nagid: see *infra*, in the note to sec. 123.

CHAPTER THREE

THE YESHIVOT

1. *The Sāvōrā'im*

(86) Notwithstanding the lofty aura surrounding the lineage of the exilarchs, supposedly based on descent from the House of David, and the long-standing traditional recognition on the part of the Persian authorities and their successors, the Muslim rulers, there is no doubt that the real center of leadership of the Diaspora as well as the focus of public life of the Jews in general, together with that of its many communities, rested with the yeshivot, Sura and Pumbedita. The heads of the yeshivot in the period under discussion were known as *geonim* (sing.: *gaon*; written: *gā'ōn*) and in the continuation I shall provide an explanation for this designation. According to the tradition preserved in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, the Babylonian Talmud was completed towards the end of AD 499. One should note that at about the same time, Mazdak's revolution against the Persian regime was at its peak, and that this was a period of upheavals and internal warfare. The sages were commonly referred to as *amōrā'im*, and from thence, the outstanding among them, all Babylonians, were known as *sāvōrā'im*. The last of the *amōrā'im*—Ravīnā in Sura and Rav Yosi in Pumbedita—are also considered the first of the *sāvōrā'im*. Together with them, there are also: Rav Aḥai (Aḥa) from Bē Ḥatīm near Neharde'a. Mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud are: Rav Samā b. Rāvā, or b. Yehudai; Rav Raḥūmī; Rav Gīzā; Rav Sīmūnā. There is also mentioned, in the printed version of the Talmud, Rav Gevīhā of Bē Argīza, whereas in the manuscript version we find: Rav Aḥī. The major source for the changes in the structure of the yeshivot is to be found in Rav Sherira's *Letter*:

... According to this, basic studies (*hōrā'ā*) continued generation after generation, until Ravīnā, when they ceased, as foreseen by Samuel Yarḥīnā'ā in the Book of Adam (unidentified): Ashī and Ravīnā are the last in the *hōrā'ā*. Thereafter, for sure: although there was no *hōrā'ā* any more, there were commentaries and interpretations, which were close to the *hōrā'ā*; those sages were called *sāvōrā'im* and everything that was not yet clarified was interpreted by (these) sages, e.g. Rav Raḥūmī, Rav Yosi, Rav Aḥai of Bē Ḥatīm...

Sherira Gaon in his *Letter* also wrote that "the sealing off of the Talmud" fell in the day of Rav Yosi, who was a contemporary of Ravīnā. Some versions of the *Letter* have additional names: Rav Eynā, Rav Aḥī of Bē Ḥatīm (who is probably the one mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud [*Hullīn*, 50b]), in the letter of the Palestinians to the Babylonians: "the Halacha to be followed is according to Samuel b. R. Abahū; and be respectful with R. Aḥī, who enlightens the Diaspora".

Apart from the names mentioned above, and a few others, we know nothing about these personalities, except for general information concerning their participation and contribution to the interpretation of talmudic sayings in those times, meaning Ravīnā's own generation, that is, the latter half of the fifth century, until the Muslim conquest. According to Ibn Da'ūd, there were in all five generations of *sāvōrā'im*, from AM 4260, AD 500 until AM 4449, AD 689, a stretch of 189 years, the last of the *sāvōrā'im* being Rav Sheshnā, whose death marked the end of the period.

Most of the *sāvōrā'im* died "within few years", according to Sherira Gaon, who relied on what he called "the historical records of the geonim". Samā b. Yehudai died in Siwan 815 Sel. (June 504) and some say that he was "judge of the Gate". Rav Aḥai b. Rav Hūnā, "died on Sunday, the 4th of Adar 817 Sel.", which was the 13th of February, 506. The 4th of Adar fell on a Monday, so it seems that he died on the Sunday evening (there is also another version: 816 Sel., but the former seems to be the correct one). In Nisan in the same year (which began on March 11th), Rav Reḥūmī died. Samuel b. Judah, "*dayyān* of Pumbedita" died in Kislev 818 Sel. (which began on the 3rd of November AD 506). In Adar of the same year (which began on the 31st of January 507) there was an earthquake and Aḥa, or Aḥai, the son of Rabbā b. Abbūh (which is incorrect) died. In 826 Sel., 515, Rav Teḥīnā and Mar Zūtrā, the sons of Hīnenā (Ḥanīna) died. Rav Joseph was the gaon (as Sherira calls him) of the two yeshivot for several years (version: *mem* years, so perhaps he meant: for forty years). He was followed by Rav Eynā in Sura and Rav Simūniyya (Sīmōnā) in Pumbedita. After Sīmōnā, in Pumbedita, there was Rav Ravai Merūv (possibly: from a place called Rūv). "And some say he was gaon". It seems that the lists in Sherira's *Letter* end at 520, approximately, and this is similar to what is stated in *Seder 'ōlām zūṭā*. Information relating to personalities of the yeshivot discontinues and only reappears after some seventy years have gone by, beginning in Sel. 900, AD 589, with Ḥanan from (Ashiqiyya), Sorgū(?), and others.

In a responsum, attributed to Sherira Gaon, dealing with the *taqqānā* relating to divorce claims, when it was noticed that "Jewish women turn to the gentiles with their claims" (i.e. they apply to the *qāḏī*), "some three hundred years from today", it says that the timing of the *taqqānā* was "after our Lords the *sāvōrā'im*". Both by the number of years and the name Rabba b. Hūnai, in whose day it is said that the new *taqqānā* was decided upon, and who lived at the beginning of Muslim rule, it appears that in Sherira Gaon's opinion, the *sāvōrā'im* preceded the Islamic era.

But, as Grätz had already indicated, the description of matters and names referred to, was the intellectual creation of the generations following the *sāvōrā'im*. Even the name *sāvōrā'im* may have been granted them in the period that succeeded them, for it is doubtful whether they would have called themselves by this name. Attention should be drawn, however, to the fact that although the *sāvōrā'im*'s time was supposed to come after Ravīnā, there are topics in the *gemārā* which are specifically attributed to *sāvōrā'im*, and there are also anonymous topics which can be distinguished by their style as belonging to *sāvōrā'im*. Halevy and Lewin have already identified a number of expressions typical of *sāvōrā'im* in the Talmud. There is no need to advance Ravīnā's time in order to create an interval

between him and the completion of the Talmud, as Halevy does in his book; one should rather see in what Sherira wrote, "the last in the *hōrā 'ā*", a statement which does not call for chronological precision. Nor does he explicitly say that the Talmud was completed on that time. But there was certainly an interval between the completion of this tremendous endeavor of collecting records of the discussions, and insert them in the Babylonian Talmud, and the renewed flourishing of the yeshivot under Islamic rule.

Harkavy tried to prove that the decline in the level of intellectual activities during that period was not caused by the "sealing off" of the Talmud, as is implied in the sources, but that it was the outcome of the perilous state of security prevailing at the time. This objective situation was responsible for limiting those activities, he believed, as well as curtailing information about them. Nevertheless, Harkavy rightly pointed to certain intellectual endeavors which continued during that period: the writing of halachic booklets, the small tractates, midrashic collections, and the beginning of the work of punctuating the Bible (the *medīnḥā 'īm* mentioned in the ancient notes in the *māsōrā*); for the yeshivot continued to be active, discussing and teaching.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ See Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV, 375. The day of Ravīnā's death is considered the day of the Talmud's conclusion; it was a Wednesday, 13 Kislev Sel. 811, 1 December 499, see Sherira, *Letter*, 69f., see *ibid.*, 70, the editor's note *a*, on R. Yose, and see there the names of the sages, 95-100; *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Giṭṭin*, 218; Feldblum, *Diqd.*, to *Giṭṭin 7a* and see the notes there. See the version of Sherira's *Letter* in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 25: "...our Masters the Sāvōrā'im... such as R. Raḥūmī, and Rabbā, and Rav Joseph, and Rav Aḥā of Bē Ḥaṭīm..." (*Giṭṭin, ibid.*), and *Šiqḏāg*, etc. "Bē Ḥaṭīm is a town in the vicinity of Neharde'a". Bē Ḥaṭīm is mentioned only in Sherira's *Letter* and seems to me to be identical to Hīt, identified by Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 166, with Hīt de-qīrā mentioned in the Talmud; the phonetic similarity and the matter of closeness to Neharde'a support the identification as Hīt. As to Bē Argīzā, it might be Hītā de-Argīz, one furlong distance from Sura, see the references in: Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 143; and see *ibid.*, in note 5, on the possibility that it was a different town, to the south east of Hilla, on the Euphrates. See Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 33-35, who has a list by generations: (a) Rabbā Yose; (b) Aḥai b. Hūnā; Samuel b. Rabbā; Ravīnā of Umṣā; Tehīna; Simōnā; 'Aynā; (c) Hanan of Ashīqūyā; Rav Marī; Hūnā; Ḥanīna; Ḥinenā; (d) R. Isaac (mentioned in Sherira's *Letter*, as the one who was heading the Jews who went en masse to encounter 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib); (e) Rabbā (in Pumbedita); Hūnā (in Sura); Bōsai; Shīšnā, whose full name was Mesharshayā b. Tahlifa, who was the last of the Sāvōrā'im. The names are taken from Sherira's *Letter*, 97-102; see in Ibn Da'ūd's *Book, ibid.* the notes of Cohen the editor, in the English part, 43-45, and see there his discussion, 198-200, about why Ibn Da'ūd gives us such a forced chronology, and why it sums up the total length of the Sāvōrā'ic period as 182 years, whereas reckoning shows that it was 189. Undoubtedly, all matters of this period, from the death of Ravīnā (Halevy, *Dōrōt*, III, 7-9, 16, endeavored to correct the date of Ravina's death, claiming it was Sel. 786, AD 474/5) to the geonic period, are quite obscure, and the sources are in fact variations on the data of Sherira's *Letter*, such as in *Seder tannā'im wa-amōrā'im*, or the version of Rabbēnū Tam, in Barukh b. Isaac, of Regensburg (previously thought to have been of Worms) *Sēfer ha-terūmā*, ch. 'avōdā zārā, no. 135: Rabbēnū Tam found at the end of *Seder 'ōlām*, that "our Masters the Sāvōrā'im (were in) AM 4564, which was a sabbatical year". The mention of a sabbatical year proves that it was not a scribal error, and the year he mentions corresponds to AD 804, which is impossible. See the *Seder tannā'im* in Luzzatto, *Kerem ḥemed*, 4 (1838/39), 187ff.; see also *Mahazōr Vitry*, 483f. and the editor's notes, *ibid.*; Zakuto, *Ha-yūḥašin*, 204. Nathan the Babylonian, who had no solid information on these matters, tells us that there is a hiatus in our knowledge about the heads of the yeshivot, from the death of R. Yose, in whose time the Talmud was concluded. The yeshivot remained "without a gaon". In the continuation, there is a garbled passage, probably indicating that though the Talmud was already concluded, the Sāvōrā'im nevertheless had an important mission, as they were heads of the yeshivot "and instructions used to be sent by them to all Jewish dias-

2. *The geonim*

(87) There is no doubt that at the time of the Muslim conquest the yeshivot considered themselves the highest spiritual authority, with absolute dominion over the Jewish masses; an authority expressing the word of God in its decisions and judgments, and equal in status to Moses and the elders in biblical times. Whoever differs with the geonim and questions their rightful power “detracts God and His inheritance.... all of it being words of the living God, which even comments by Moses, Head of the Prophets, could not change even for the least.... so whoever challenges anything of what they (i.e. the geonim) say, challenges God and His Torah”.

The yeshiva is the substitute of the *sanhedrīn* of the period of the second Temple and of the sages of the Talmud. The *sanhedrīn*—a Greek term (*synhedrion*) whose meaning was analogous to Hebrew *yeshivā* and Aramaic *methīvā*, can still be found in the letters of the geonim and their responsa. Even Šemaḥ b. Solomon, “Head of the judges of the Gate of Hisdai the exilarch”, son of Naṭrūnai the exilarch, writes to Qayrawān (at the beginning of the ninth century): “.... receive the greetings from myself and the *alūfīm* and the elder Masters of the First Row (see on these terms below), who substitute for the Great Sanhedrīn and the Masters who substitute for the Small Sanhedrīn” etc. Among the Jewish communities, one used to say a blessing, in the prayer *yeqūm purqān* “for our Lords and Masters, the holy assemblies, both in Palestine and Babylonia”; meaning the yeshivot.

A typical expression can be found in one of Sherira Gaon’s letters addressed to the people of the Maghrib: abandoning the yeshiva (that is the cutting off of ties with the yeshiva and the transfer to another authority), will bring punishment from Heaven. “How can the head be spoiled and the body remain intact”, he asks. The yeshiva of Pumbedita is the Sanhedrīn, and the head of the yeshiva (that is, he himself) “is in Moses’ stead”.

A pact was considered to exist between the yeshiva and the people, and it seems that there was actually a ceremony to mark such a pact—substantiated by Nathan the Babylonian’s description—perhaps on the occasion of the appointment of a new gaon. This is explicitly stated in a rela-

poras”; see Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 77f. In *Seder tannā’īm wa-amōrā’īm* we only find names, some of them slightly different from those of Sherira Gaon. See the responsa ascribed to Sherira Gaon: *Šha’arē šedeq*, 56, no. 15, and see *Rāvā*, *Rabbā*, in Sherira, *Letter*, 101 (note *e* of Lewin, *ibid.*, 102). *Rāvā* was gaon of Pumbedita around 650. See also Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 7. Lewin, in Sherira’s *Letter*, 96 n. c, explains the term *hōrā’ā* used by Sherira, as in the BT, *Berākhot*, 5a: “that thou mayest teach them (*le-hōrōtām*, Ex. 24:12), this means: the Talmud”, therefore Sherira should have meant by *hōrā’ā*: the Talmud. Students of Talmud have tried (and some try even in our day), to discover passages in the Talmud that have been inserted by the *sāvōrā’īm*, see Harkavy in Grätz (Hebrew), III, 13, n.a (previously published in *REJ* 5 (1882), 199ff.; see also Halevy, *Dōrōt*, III, 19a; Lewin, *Ginzē qedem*, 4 (1929/30), 57ff.; *idem*, *Azkārā*, 4 (1936/37), 145ff. See the general survey on the *sāvōrā’īm* in Brüll, *JJGL*, 2 (1876), 23ff., 97ff. See on this topic also Efrati, *Teq. ha-sāv.*, 54; he assumed that the period of the *sāvōrā’īm* coincided with the decline of the exilarchate under the Persians, when the exilarchs were not allowed any more to appoint the heads of the yeshivot; however, one wonders why there is not even a hint of it in Sherira’s *Letter*. See also the views of Zeynī, *Sinai*, 54:279, 1990/91 about “the end of the *hōrā’ā*”: Ravīna in Sura and Aśī (not Aśhī) in Pumbedita, as parallels to *sōf sevārā* (end of the *sāvōrā’īm*): Gīzā and Šīmōnā.

tively later source (but it seems that even then they acted in accordance with tradition, as in many other matters), in what Samuel b. Eli, gaon of Baghdad, writes in Tishri, 1505 Sel., i.e. September 1193. He reminds the community of Irbil of its obligations according to the "pact and oath, renewed and stable, which was concluded with you, our dear ones, may God support you in your greatness, more than thirty years ago (that is, from 1160 approximately) and according to the oaths we received from you".⁸⁷

(88) It is well-known that the heads of the yeshivot were called 'geonim' during the Muslim period. However, any attempt to determine when the use of this title began is a waste of time. It is obvious that the term expresses a desire for greater centralization and authority. Scholars have always had the feeling that this innovation was somehow connected with the change of rulers. Sherira Gaon describes in his characteristically sparse manner, an extremely important event in the annals of the relationship between the Jews of Babylonia and the new rulers, which I have already mentioned above: the meeting of Rav Isaac, at the head of 90,000 Jews, with 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, in the vicinity of Fīrūz Shābūr, i.e. Neharde'a. It was already assumed that this was the moment in which a great innovation took place: the recognition of the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva (Fīrūz Shābūr is al-Anbār, which to the Jews of those generations was Neharde'a, as well as Pumbedita), and the occasion on which the new role was accorded him by the caliph. Ginzberg was of the opinion that the yeshivot enjoyed another noteworthy achievement and that was the permission to set up another authoritative body in addition to the exilarchate. His view was that this prerogative was given to Sura in particular, the older (which is not so) and more respected of the two. This is one instance out of many, of how scholars are sometimes inclined to use their imagination and complete things which were not said or even hinted at in the sources.

⁸⁷ See the responsum in *Shā'arē sēdeq* in the verso of the front-page, where it is ascribed to Sherira Gaon, whereas in the parallel version, *Shā'arē teshūvā*, 19b (par. 187) it is ascribed to Naṭrūnai Gaon. Harkavy does not seem to have been right, when he argued, mainly basing upon stylistic considerations, in his *Resp.*, pp. xff. of his introduction, that these statements are a late addition; Müller, in *Maṭteah*, 182 n. 18, considered that the responsum in its main belonged indeed to Sherira Gaon, but it does have some additions, without specifying which they were. As to the view itself, it is extant in the whole geonic literature, as can also be seen from this phrase, found in many responsa: "this is what we have been ordered from Heaven". The (originally Greek term) *sanhedrīn* (=synhedrion) is but Hebrew *yeshīvā*, *meṭivā* in Aramaic. The responsum of Ṣemaḥ b. Solomon: Dukes, *Ben Chananja*, 4 (1861), 141f., reprinted by Harkavy, *Resp.*, 389. *Yeqūm purqān, Maḥazor Vitry*, 172. See also *Tesh. Ha-g. Lyck*, no. 56, what 'Amram Gaon wrote to the community of Barcelona: "Receive greetings from myself and from Master Ṣemaḥ, judge of the court, and from the *rāshē kallā*, and from all the appointed scholars, who are the substitute for the Great Sanhedrīn, and from the *benē sāyomē* who are the substitute for the Small Sanhedrīn". Similar phrases may be found in letters of the Palestinian yeshiva. Sherira Gaon's letter: 23 b, lines 6-7, 17-19. The letter of Samuel b. Eli: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (part c; 1929/30), 30 (28a). Gafni, *Zion*, 43:12, 1978, examines the meaning of the terms *yeshīvā* and *meṭivā* in the Babylonian Talmud, noting that in the Palestinian tradition the term *yeshīvā* was synonymous with 'court' and *sanhedrīn*, whereas among the Babylonians it has always been a learning institution; he also endeavours to prove that there were semantic differences in the use of this term, both in the talmudic and the geonic periods. However, I think that these terms are unspecific. It is not semantics that changed, but historical reality, as the power of the Babylonian yeshivot increased under Muslim rule.

Malter, following in Ginzberg's footsteps, stressed the fact that it was the new rulers who granted the yeshivot a higher status. In his view, their new position indicated more than the superiority of their heads in matters of law and learning; it was an expression of their recognition, both on the part of the exilarch, leader of the Jews, and by the Muslim rulers. He assumed that the Sura yeshiva was given a certain degree of autonomy with this recognition. As to the title 'gaon', he thought as Ginzberg did, that it was reserved for the head of the Sura yeshiva at first, while Pumbedita was granted the title only in Caliph al-Ma'mūn's time, that is in the first half of the ninth century, as a consequence of the rivalry between David and Daniel over the role of exilarch, which was followed by Pumbedita being granted a similar status to that of Sura. Indeed Sura's initial priority is confirmed in the sources, that is, in what Nathan the Babylonian had to say about the merits of its yeshiva: "... there would not be a gaon in Pumbedita unless (he was confirmed) by Sura, i.e. by its yeshiva head. Ginzberg has further proof of this priority in a version of a responsum dealing with the procedures of ritual slaughter as formulated by the Sura Gaon, Jacob b. Mordecai (apparently 798-810), addressed to the Pumbedita yeshiva, whose head was then Joseph b. Shīlā (798-804): the responsum is addressed to the *bēt-dīn* of the yeshiva and not to the head of the yeshiva. This is not a serious proof. However, as mentioned above, Sura's priority during the first two hundred years of Muslim rule cannot be denied, and I will deal with this below.

We have noted that the scholars' opinions generally tend to determine the beginning of the yeshiva's new status, the advantage of greater responsibility and prestige that was accorded them, as well as the beginning of the head of the yeshiva's use of the title 'gaon', in the generation that followed the conquest (and we have seen that one of the scholars did not pay any attention whatsoever to the chronological difference), that is, in the (shaky) reign of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. What Sherira Gaon writes in his *Letter* describing the move to Fīrūz Shābūr can be added to the lack of clarity on this matter: "they were not able.... to appoint geonim", when referring to the height of the Persian era, as if this title already existed then. He also sometimes calls the *amōrā'im* geonim, evidently projecting his thoughts to the past, for instance to Rav Ḥisda (who died in AD 309) and to Rav Ashi (who died in AD 427) and also to the *sāvōrā'im*, as we have seen above: Rav Joseph and Rav Rabai (or: Ravrevay), who "some say was gaon". Eppenstein concluded from this that the heads of the yeshivot were already called geonim in the Persian period, for the status of the yeshiva was then already honored by both the Jews and the rulers, and hence it is not surprising that Rav Isaac, a personality of the yeshiva, was the one who stood at the head of the Jews to welcome the Muslim ruler.

Mann describes the major change in the status of the yeshivot and the geonim as an outcome of the Muslim conquest, which resulted in the tremendous growth in the Babylonian yeshivot's sphere of influence. (Mann rightly ignores the chronological point despite its extreme significance, for the simple reason that we do not have sufficient evidence in the sources in order to set a definite date.) Before the Muslim conquest, the yeshivot's sphere of influence was restricted to Babylonia and Persia. With the invasion of the Arabs into the boundaries of the two ancient kingdoms, the

Babylonian yeshivot began to be heard in other countries and the ties between the yeshivot and the communities throughout the Diaspora became stronger. This process reached its peak in the first half of the eleventh century, during Rav Hayy's function as gaon (1004-1038).

In summarizing this subject, one must again stress that the sources are not unequivocal with regard to the beginning of the role of 'gaon'. There is some basis to the assumption that it was introduced before the Muslim conquest. Apart from the question of the title, there is no doubt that already in the Persian period, the yeshivot played a central role which was not inferior to that of the exilarchate; for they constituted the spiritual leadership of the Babylonian Jews, as is clearly evident from the Talmud. Although it is possible that the exilarch enjoyed the preference of the Persian regime, and perhaps also that of the Jewish masses in the diaspora, who were filled with love and longing for the House of David. After the conquest, the status of the yeshivot and their heads was constantly growing in comparison with the exilarchs, particularly in view of their spiritual superiority and learning, which increased their prestige and influence throughout the Diaspora under Islam's dominion, which was the great majority of the Jewish diaspora. This influential and focal position remained with them even when the Muslim kingdom began to disintegrate and was caught up in endless internal struggles, because despite the division, the Muslim world remained a stable framework to a large extent, both because of the possibility of mobility within its confines and also from the aspect of the comparatively cultural unity which dominated it.⁸⁸

(89) We have still to discuss the three terms which were characteristic of the yeshivot during the period under discussion, that is, the by-names for the yeshivot: *yeshivā shelgōlā* (of the diaspora), *yeshivat ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, and the title *gā'ōn*—their source and original meaning. The name *yeshivā shelgōlā* is frequently found in the geonim's responsa and letters. Ginzberg tried to prove that this by-name referred especially to the Pumbedita yeshiva, while the Sura yeshiva was called *yeshivat ge'ōn ya'aqōv*. He also tried to explain the name on the basis of what is said in the Talmud (*Rosh ha-shana* 23b, referring to the signals, in the Mishnā, *ibid.*, ch. ii) "....What is *gōlā*? Rav Joseph said: it is Pumbedita". Ginzberg's comments, claiming on the basis of this passage that already in the talmudic period the word *gōlā* was synonymous with Pumbedita, do not convey the correct meaning;

⁸⁸ See Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 127 n. 2; Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 52ff.; Malter, *Saadia*, 98f. The status of Pumbedita: Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 46ff., 54; on the priority of Sura, see Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 78; see *Sefer ha-pardes* (Ehrenreich), 127: "....Jacob b. Mordecai head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsiya. This letter was brought before us, the great of the yeshiva, in which it was written: to the court of our Lord and Master Joseph, head of the yeshiva, son of our Lord and Master Shila....". One also has to pay attention to the fact that, in his *Letter*, Sherira Gaon does not say that the R. Isaac who went to meet 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib was indeed the yeshiva head of Pumbedita, and Halevi, *Dorot*, III, 168f., has already reprimanded Grätz on this matter. See Sherira, *Letter*, 101; cf. Brüll, *JJGL*, 2 (1876), 50 n. 72; Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 10. Eppenstein disagreed with Brüll, *JJGL*, 9 (1889), 116, who argued that there was no gaon with the name Isaac. See Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 462ff; the article 'Gaon' (A. Eckstein and W. Bacher) in the *JE*, V, 567, where they indicate that Sherira Gaon called gaon Rav Ashī, of the *amōrā'im*; however the term gaon becomes stable in his *Letter* only from the end of the sixth century. They assumed that the term gaon became that of an office, with Hānān of Ashiqiyā, who became gaon of Pumbedita, whereas the first gaon of Sura was Rav Mar bar Hūnā.

and it is clear that what Rav Joseph wanted to say is not that the *gōlā*, the diaspora, was called Pumbedita (or vice versa), but that only Pumbedita was the point from which the *gōlā* begins when passing on the information via the beacon signals. And indeed, we find that Samuel b. Hophni, gaon of Sura, calls himself *rōsh yeshīvā shelgōlā*. However, it is not true that only Sura called itself *yeshivat ge'ōn ya'aqōv*; here for example: "this query was received by us at the Gate of the *yeshīvā shelgōlā* at the court of our master Aaron ha-Kohen head of the *yeshivat ge'ōn ya'aqōv*" that is Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, i.e. Khalaf b. Sarjāda, head of the Pumbedita yeshiva. Harkavy has already mentioned that the *yeshivat ge'ōn ya'aqōv* is taken from the Psalms (47:5): "He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob (*ge'ōn ya'aqōv*) whom He loved. Selah". And as there were others who thought that the title 'gaon' stems from Arabic or Persian (perhaps *ja'ān* on the pattern of *raḥmān*) Harkavy explained that it is merely an abbreviation. Instead of Rav so-and-so head of the *yeshivat ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, one used to say, or to write: Rav so-and so Gaon.

Some of the scholars naturally tried to make comparisons between the yeshivot and their sages during the talmudic period and the yeshivot and their geonim during the period under discussion. Up to this point, we have seen innovations in mainly external matters, such as names or titles (and see more on these below). However, there is no doubt that the yeshivot had most unique and significant qualities during the geonic period, and the first to understand this was Ginzberg. On the one hand, we find in every tractate in the Talmud, pages of *gemārā* each of which mention, one after the other, a large number of sages who participate in the discussion, and they were not necessarily heads of the yeshivot, and their association with a specific yeshiva is not recorded. Out of the hundreds of *amōrā'im*, one can hardly point to a dozen names of heads of yeshivot. On the other hand, if we scan the responsa of the geonim for some four hundred years, there is hardly a responsum from someone from the yeshiva but from the gaon. The exclusive right of the gaon to write and answer on behalf of the yeshiva was evidently self-understood, but Ginzberg also found explicit evidence related to Mar Rav Ḥanīna (evidently, or Mar Rav Samūnai) who—it says in the version of the responsum—is not the one to write the answer, as he only was a *rōsh kallā* and not the head of the yeshiva—whereas the writer was evidently Naṭrūnai Gaon. Hence we see that the yeshiva had become a much more hierarchical and centralized institution, an institution in which things are discussed for learning, or for halachic interpretation and no longer for the promulgation of the laws. Legal decisions were now the focal matter, not any more the negotiations between the sages. As to the circles from which the geonim came, Ginzberg has already shown that although the role of gaon was not hereditary, unlike that of exilarch, the geonim stemmed from but a few families, and he numbers them five in all: two in Pumbedita and three in Sura. (I shall return to this subject in the continuation.) It is possible that the fact that the seat of the gaon was not inherited, unlike the exilarchate, may be the key to the priority achieved by the yeshivot over the exilarchate. On the other hand, even this limited legacy was, as we shall see below, the source of bitter crises within the yeshivot and the decline of their status and prestige. However, in this sphere, we must distinguish between cause and effect. Here the new conditions and the change in the functions

are what determined the centralization. The Babylonian yeshivot assumed the leadership of a huge number of Jewish communities, who expectantly followed every word appearing in the gaon's responsa. The leadership of the masses, the honor, the prestige, the authority over property and a great deal of money—all these aggravated the struggle over the leadership and even placed stringent personal demands on the contender for the seat of the gaon. And this was the onset of the strenuous process of preparing the handover from father to son. The gaon wanted to bring his son, or sons, closer to the realm of halacha and to its methods of study and teaching, as well as convey the aptness for public relations with the communities and their leading personalities. In this manner, the conditions were thus created for the solidification of those few families from which the geonim stemmed.⁸⁹

3. *The organization and structure of the yeshiva*

(90) Having clarified, as far as possible, the affairs of the head of the yeshiva, the gaon, I shall now discuss the other roles and ranks within the yeshiva, as well as the different terms connected with them. Not all of these terms are comprehensible and we also have difficulty understanding the precise nature of some of them, despite the many important sources now available to us.

An important source for an understanding of the yeshiva's structure are the openings of the letters of the geonim, in which they convey greetings

⁸⁹ Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 148; see Poznanski, *REJ*, 51 (1906), 55f., who notes that the geonim did not call themselves "head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora", but of "yeshivat *ge'ōn ya'aqov*", whereas the yeshiva itself, or its court, were usually addressed as "the gate of the yeshiva of the Diaspora". See also what he wrote in *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/13), 408; and see *ibid.*, 402, where he argues with Ginzberg's opinion, that the heads of the yeshiva of Pumbedita were first called *alifim*, not *ge'ōnim*. Samuel b. Hophni: see 51, 56; the preamble to the responsum: *Hemda gen.*, 7b (no. 37). What Maimonides wrote, which is often quoted in this subject, with the expression of disdain for all the titles and labels, is adequate for his own time; however, in earlier days they had a true significance; see his *Pērūsh ha-mishnā*, to *Bekhōrōt*, 4:4: "take you care not to be induced in error in all the titles of fame used in Iraq and in al-Shām, where some people are called *rōsh yeshivā*, others *av-bēt-din*, and they distinguish between *rōsh yeshivāt ge'ōn ya'aqov* and *rōsh yeshivā shel golā'*, etc.; ...since all this matters are sure idle talk.... I even met people in Palestine who call themselves *havērim* and elsewhere others who call themselves *rōsh yeshivā* whereas they are more illiterate than a newborn baby". See an extensive discussion on the matter of the titles and labels: Marx, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 71. See Rapoport, *Kerem hemed*, 4 (1838/39), 225; 7 (1842/43), 268f. Harkavy, in Grätz (Hebrew), III, 128, n. 19; *idem*, *JQR*, 12:706, 1899/900, described the dissemination of the custom of using the term geonim not only for the heads of the yeshivot, but also for outstanding scholars, such as Rav Aḥai, author of the *She'iltōt*, Hefes b. Yaśliah, Shabbetai Donnolo, and others. See Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 6ff., II, 31, and Poznanski's views on it: *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/13), 398f.; also: Baron, *Saadia Anniv. Vol.*, 51. When one contemplates the accumulating influence of heredity in leading offices, one cannot avoid contemplating also the situation which obtained during the talmudic period in the *sanhedrin*, i.e., the yeshiva of Palestine, and its system of absolute heredity of the *nesi'im*, beginning with Hillel the Elder. It is not far from plausible that the decline of this institution resulted not only from external circumstances, which were indeed very serious ones, but also from that system; see on this also: Grossman, *Zion*, 50 (1985), 189ff.; he is right in challenging the view of Assaf (*Teq. ha-g.*, 99), who considered the preference for the sons of geonim a phenomenon of Palestine only, not extant in Babylonia.

from the yeshiva, listing the people of the yeshiva according to their ranks. From these openings we get a general picture of the yeshiva's organization and are generally able to gauge the relative importance of the office-holders.

It seems that the oldest source of this kind is a double leaf from a quire of responsa dating from the days of "Mattathias, head of the *yeshiva ge'ōn yā'āqōv*", of Nisan, 1174 Sel., i.e. 863, when *alūfīm*, sages and members of the yeshiva (*talmīdīm*) left the yeshiva (apparently at the end of the *kallā* in the month of Adar) and went to their homes. In the same source, the opening of a responsum of 'Amram b. Sheshnā, gaon of Sura (ca. 870), the greetings are on behalf of the gaon, of Šemah the "judge of the Court, of the *rāshē kallā*, of the sages substituting for the Great Sanhedrīn", the *sā-yōmē* who substitute for "the Small Sanhedrīn", sages, teachers, *talmīdīm*.

Saadia Gaon counts the *alūfīm* in Sura, his son She'ērīt, "all the sages of the yeshiva" and "the regular teachers (*mashnīm*) in the house of our Master (*rabbēnū*)". In the letters of Nehemiah Gaon, head of the Pumbedita yeshiva (differently from Saadia Gaon, head of Sura), the opening part mentions the *alūfīm*, the 'Lords' of the yeshiva, sages, elders, the sons of geonim, scribes, *talmīdīm*. Ṭōv *baḥūrēnū*, that is, Ṭōv, son of the gaon, is also mentioned. Sherira recalls, prior to his becoming gaon, when he stood at the head of a kind of a separate faction in the Pumbedita yeshiva, his son Hayy (*Hayy baḥūrēnū*), the "great of the yeshiva", "its mighty ones and *alūfīm*", the sages, the scribes, the *talmīdīm*. In a later letter, when he was already gaon of Pumbedita, he recalls a convening of *alūfīm* and sages; the convening of *perāqīm*; the *talmīdīm* are to be called (to the yeshiva), and here the son, *Hayy baḥūrēnū*, is mentioned again. In an opening of a responsum to the community of Fās, we find: *rāshē kallē, rāshē pirqē, rabbānān* (our 'Lords') *de-dārā rabbā* ("of the great row"), *rabbānān de-sayyōmē, rabbānān tannā'ē*. Samuel b. Hophni mentions his son Israel *sōfēr ha-yeshivā baḥūrēnū* (our son, the scribe of the yeshiva), *rāshē sedārīm, rāshē midrāshīm, rāshē perāqīm, sāyyōmīm, sī'ōt* (groupings), *alūfīm*, sages, sons of geonim, judges, *tannā'īm, talmīdīm, sōferīm* (scribes). His son Israel, when he had already become gaon, recalls "Joseph b. Av (=av-bēt-dīn), our uncle"; that is, Joseph b. Isaac b. Hophni (Isaac, brother of the Gaon Samuel, was *av-bēt-dīn* in Sura during his brother's occupation of the role of Gaon, and Joseph is hence Israel's cousin), *alūfīm*, sages, *segānīm* (deputies), sons of geonim, judges, *tannā'īm, talmīdīm, sōferīm*. One can find further examples, but this will have to suffice, for one can easily note that in the above quotations, there are partly realistic elements and some florid terminology, or general titles, such as sages, 'the great' of the yeshiva, elders, *adīrīm, eytānīm* ("mighty ones"), *sī'ōt* (groupings), deputies, *sārīm* ('princes'). It is doubtful whether all these variations of *rāshīm* ('heads') recalled by Sherira Gaon actually existed and the fact that he mentioned them was to enable the addressees to differentiate between the various roles, or whether mentioning all these heads was only intended to impress the addressees. Similarly, this was probably the case with regard to the judges mentioned by Samuel b. Hophni and his son Israel.

Nathan the Babylonian comes to our aid in his story of the Babylonian yeshivot. His depiction is basically that of the yeshiva's orders and customs

during the first half of the tenth century. Obviously the gaon presided, while facing him in the first row were ten of the yeshiva's sages, the *dārā qammā*. Ten of the yeshiva's most prestigious sages are seated in the first row, facing the gaon, and they are the *rāshē kallōt*. Of considerable significance is the fact that Nathan does not utter a word about the yeshiva's organization, or about the many functions and other ranks mentioned in the letters of the geonim, although he does recall *benē rav*, a designation of the regular members of the yeshiva, and in some parts of his story, he mentions *talmidim* and *tannā'im*. Over two hundred years later, during the latter half of the twelfth century, Petahiah of Regensburg describes a few of the arrangements: the gaon sits on high and the *talmidim* sit on the ground, while the *meturgeman* mediates, sitting between the gaon and the pupils. And in the same period, we are provided with a few details from a letter of the gaon Samuel b. Eli, in which he mentions the *meturgeman* but there is no further reference to the *rāshē kallā* and the *rāshē perāqim*; the *dārā qammā*, *zignē ha-shūrā*, *benē shūrātēnū*, *soferē emet*, *mashnūm*, *rāshē ha-seder*, are recalled. He also mentions a new title: *segan ha-yeshivā* (although *segānūm* were also mentioned in Samuel b. Hophni's letters and those of his son Israel).

We encounter references to the *bēt-dīn* of the yeshiva, that is the great *bēt-dīn*, as it is occasionally called. We also find the title *dayyānē de-vāvā*, (the judges of the Gate); and we have seen that a *dayyānā de-vāvā* turned up in the exilarch's letters and we find exactly the same term in the yeshiva. Here there is an obvious difference, from what we know today about the Palestinian yeshiva, where the *av-bēt-dīn* is an outstanding figure who is frequently mentioned in the sources, especially in the letters from the yeshiva, while in the openings of letters from the Babylonian yeshivot, he is generally not mentioned at all, and if he is mentioned—we find the title *av-bēt-dīn* only once in a letter of the gaon Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel (see above in this chapter), in the shortened form *av*, when he mentions his uncle Isaac, his father's brother. And more generally, one can say that the difference is marked with regard to Palestine, for there we find a group of seven central figures headed by the gaon and the *av-bēt-dīn*, who were the first and second in rank and authority, while all the others were entitled 'the third', 'the fourth', etc., until 'the seventh'. This was a genuine leadership, in the main, a permanent framework, apparently rooted in the tradition of many generations. Whereas in Babylonia we do not find such a stable framework, and moreover even the *av-bēt-dīn* is sometimes present and at other times not. The yeshiva undoubtedly included a *bēt-dīn*, a court, and we read about a Great Court, that is, the *sha'ar* (Gate of) *ha-yeshivā*. Thus we find in a deed from 997, that the witnesses come to the Gate of the yeshiva, the *bēt-dīn ha-gādōl*. In the version of a responsum from the gaon 'Amram b. Sheshnā, he also sends greetings from "Šemaḥ *av-bēt-dīn* of all Israel". Although Mann was of the opinion that perhaps this referred to Šemaḥ who was the chief justice of the court of the exilarch Hisdai b. Naṭrūnai; 'Amram Gaon, however, writes on behalf of the yeshiva and mentions people of the yeshiva, and why did he have to include the exilarch's *dayyān*? There certainly were more people called Šemaḥ. Hophni b. Kohen Šedeq, Samuel's father, was also *dayyān* of the Gate (*dayyānā de-vāvā*) as we know from various other references. Hophni was called *av*, that

is, *av-bêt-dîn*, as well as *dayyān al-bāb* (judge of the Gate), from which we conclude that *av-bêt-dîn* and *dayyān ha-sha'ar* were identical, contrary to Eppenstein's view, that there were two courts in the yeshiva, that is, a regular court, i.e. "the Gate of the yeshiva", and the "Great Court". In Samuel b. Eli's letters, written toward the end of the twelfth century, we no longer come across the title *dayyānā de-vāvā*, judge of the Gate.

In the light of the foregoing, I believe it permissible to conclude that in the Babylonian yeshivot, the rank of *av-bêt-dîn* or *dayyān ha-sha'ar*, had a less permanent character than those of the Palestinian yeshiva. Of course this does not mean that the Babylonian yeshivot were less active in the legal sphere; the "Great Court" was part of the yeshiva and it appears that on occasion, the gaon fulfilled the role of chief judge himself, choosing the legal experts he saw fit to assist him. At times—and we do not know how often—the gaon would pass on the handling of legal matters to one of the yeshiva's people, who would then be granted the title *dayyānā de-vāvā*. As to the judges in the communities, we find below (sec. 94) that among the Babylonians, the local judge was generally called *rēsh bē rabbānān*, and the court was called: *bē rabbānān*.⁹⁰

(91) From Nathan the Babylonian's description, we understand that in the yeshiva, at any rate in Sura, where he was very much at home, there were seven rows. Nathan explains that there were seven *rāshē kallōt*, each of whom was at the head of ten from the *sanhedrīn*, and they were also called *alūfīm*. This rank, that is, of *rōsh kallā* (also: *kallā*, and pl.: *kallīm*) or *alūf*, was hereditary, according to Nathan. Even if the son was a minor, he inherited his father's station, at least in principle, unless he was not deserving of it owing to his inferior intellect and he would then move and sit

⁹⁰ Mattathias, 'Amram: TS 20.183a in the right side ll. 18ff.; in the left side, ll. 17ff., and see below, note 96. Saadia Gaon: 8, a, ll. 15-17. Nehemiah Gaon, see 15, 16; Sherira Gaon, 19, b, l. 2; 21, c, ll. 3ff.; to the Fās community: MS Parma, Stern 30, in: Halberstam, *Jeschurun* (Kobak), 5 (1865/66), 137; also in: Lewin, *JJLG*, 7 (1909), 254. Halberstam, *ibid.*, is the first to write on the order in the yeshivot. Samuel b. Hophni: 51, b, ll. 1ff.; Israel ha-Kohen Gaon b. Samuel: 65, b, ll. 9ff.; Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 87. Petahiah, 8ff.; the general picture, as it results from the letters of Samuel b. Eli, was portrayed by Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1929/30), 111ff.; the writ of the court: 29, ll. 9-10. 'Amram Gaon: *Seder rav 'amram*, 49. See Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 338; see the Oxford manuscript in Dukes, *Ben-Chananja*, 4 (1861), 141f., and parallel versions in *Resp. Lyck*, no. 56, and also in TS 20.183 (mentioned above in this note). Hophni chief judge, see in: TS 6 K 2, f. 2, in a list of dates of deceases; in Samuel b. Hophni's commentary to the pericope *wayehi* (Gen. 47:28: "and Jacob lived"), cf. Harkavy, *Zikkārōn*, 7f., 10 n. 3 (=Greenbaum, ed., *Perush*, 397); Samuel's dirge on his father: "dirges that were said on our father, the judge of the Gate Master Hophni b. Kohen Šedeq...."; see also Harkavy, *Resp.*, no. 544. Šemaḥ b. Solomon the chief judge: Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 10. See also: Marx, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 771, who noticed the lack of the chief judge in the list of notables in whose names greetings were sent to the addressees; pace him, this was not an error! See on such matters also Mann, *Texts*, I, 150, 152, 168, 177f. See the relevant letters of Samuel b. Eli, in: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1st part; 1929/30), 112. See the mention of "the judge of the Gate, 'Amram the judge of the Gate" in the Harkavy manuscript printed by Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/33), 43; Mann, *Texts*, I, 558; which was probably from the time of the gaon Joseph b. Ravrevaī, ca. 840. See Assaf, *ibid.*, 41. In one of the versions of a responsum of the gaon Natrūnai b. Hillai, there is mention of "the four courts of the two yeshivot" (see *Ḥemda gen.* and parallels); but this is a misscript, as in a parallel version in *Sha'arē šedeq* and elsewhere, there is, correctly: "the four capital punishments of the two yeshivot", and also this version as well seems to be a garbled one, at least we are exempted from the thought about four courts, two for each yeshiva; see these versions in *Ōṣar ha-g. to ketubbōt*, 107.

with the *talmīdīm* who numbered some four hundred. Although the term *havēr* did not have the same significance as it had in the Palestinian yeshiva, Nathan uses the title (in the original Arabic version) in order to define the figures in the yeshiva who were not *alūfīm* but who occupied one of the seven rows, and whose seats were also passed down from father to son (he was possibly using the term in its vague Arabic connotation—*ḥabr*, scholar). We find in Sherira's and Hayy's letter to Jacob b. Nissim in Qayrawān, a description fitting that of Nathan the Babylonian; of Jacob it is said there that he was "*alūf* at the head of his row". They request Jacob b. Nissim to write at the opening of the letters he sends to the communities, a heading which befits someone who has been proclaimed a leader: "Jacob b. Nissim *rōsh kallā alūf dārā rabbā*" (of the Great Row).

Whereas there were uncertainties in the past concerning the meaning and significance of the title *rōsh kallā*, today it is clear that it meant the head of a row. This is implied in Nathan the Babylonian's story, from which it is clear that *rōsh kallā* and *alūf* are one and the same. This identification can be found in the opening of a letter from Sherira and Hayy to Jacob ibn 'Awkal, where they call him *rōsh kallā* on one occasion and *alūf* on another, and once in Arabic: *ra's al-kull*. From these examples, it is obvious that the title *alūf* and *rōsh kallā* was generally bestowed on central figures in the communities of the Babylonian diaspora, and it can be assumed that these figures were generally judges (*avōt-bēt-dīn*) in their localities as well. As one can see from the indices in my book on Palestine and in this book, we know of a number of personalities who bore this title.

The rows in the yeshiva are an ancient tradition, as is the status of the heads of the rows, as we understand from the phrase of Samuel b. Abbahū (*Hullin*: 49a): "My father was one of *rāshē kallē* of Rafram". According to Nathan the Babylonian, those *alūfīm* or *rāshē kallā*, sat in the first row, that is: the *dārā qammā*, or *dārā rabbā* (mentioned above), which was also called "the row of the Neharde'ans" as it says in Sherira Gaon's letter to Jacob b. Nissim concerning a certain *rōsh kallā*, who is "head of the row in our yeshiva". He calls Jacob b. Nissim the "greatest of the members of the Sanhedrīn", and there as well: "the mightiest of our *kallīm*" (meaning: *rāshē kallā*). On Shemariah b. Elhanan, the leader of the 'Babylonians' in Fustat, it is said that he is the *rōsh shūrat neharde'e* (head of the 'Nehardean' row), as well as: "we appointed him as our substitute.... placing him at the head of the Great Row". Saadia gaon was also an *alūf* at first (and perhaps his father also bore this title, see on it below). We also have a congratulatory letter apparently from Hayy Gaon, to someone whose name was not preserved, except for that of his father), who was appointed *rōsh kallā*. The letter contains a sort of apology for the fact that the appointment was delayed for such a long time, it was "all a decree from Heaven".

There were undoubtedly permanent figures in the yeshiva, those select sages who bore the title *alūf* or *rōsh kallā*. There is a typical letter of approximately 850, already mentioned above and apparently written by Hayy b. David to the people of Qayrawān. In order to enhance Pumbedita's image and to show to what extent it was discriminated against in the matter of money sent to the yeshivot, he notes that there are in it seven *alūfīm*, and he mentions four of them: Ahī (=Aḥa) ha-Kohen b. Mar (Marī), who became gaon for six months in 858; Menaḥem b. Joseph b. Ḥiyyā, who also became

gaon, from 858 to 860; Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevai b. Ḥanīna, who became gaon from 860 to 869; Qimoi, evidently the above-mentioned Aḥa's son, who became gaon after Hayy b. David (who, as said above, I consider to be the writer of the letter) in 896-905. (Although Abramson assumed that it was extremely unlikely that a father and son, that is Aḥa and Qimoi, would be *alūfīm* at the same time, as is indeed implied in what Nathan the Babylonian writes, there may have been exceptions to the rules for it is understandable that with regard to an outstanding scholar, such non-conformity would have been acceptable.) These *alūfīm* sit in the first *dūr* together with a great many "old sages".

As to the number of rows in the yeshiva, the seven rows described by Nathan the Babylonian was the case as far as Sura was concerned. We know that in Palestine there were three rows, and it seems that this was also the custom in Pumbedita, for the letter referring to Shemariah b. Elḥanan distinctly speaks of three rows.⁹¹

(92) One of the terms we still have difficulty understanding is *perāqīm*, and the title attached to it: *rōsh pereg*. These terms and titles are undoubtedly very ancient and the term *pereg* is common in the Talmud and we have merely to glance into the Concordance to see this. The primary meaning, like in present-day Hebrew, is to take apart or disconnect. *Pereg* is also 'part' and there is also the Aramaic meaning: 'to solve' and also: to 'redeem'. It can also be understood as 'a date' and as "a period of time". There is also the connotation: "at the same time". "In one *pereg*" means: simultaneously, as in the story on the pupils of R. ʿAqīva, who are said to have died "in one *pereg*" (BT, *Yev.*, 62b). However, there is clearly an additional meaning, found in a few sources, which is 'an assembly' or 'symposium'. Such as in BT, *Rōsh ha-sh.* 35a: "Eleazar said: one has first to

⁹¹ Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 87; see also 12, IIb; the letter of Sherira and Hayy: 32. The letter to Ibn ʿAwkal: 34, II, 6, 13, 15, 18. The first to have correctly interpreted the term *kallā* was Epstein, *JQR*, NS 12 (1921/22), 369ff.; he compared a passage in the printed versions of the Talmud, *Ketubbōt*, 60a, to a geonic responsum (probably Saadia): the story of a divorcee who refused to give suck to her baby, and was then put in a row of women and having the baby pass in front of them, he drew to his mother; in the printed versions it is said: she was put in a *dārā de-nāshē*, whereas the responsum cites it: *kallā de-nāshē*; see Harkavy, *Resp.*, 99 (no. 212). The correct meaning of *dārā*, or *kallā* is: a rounded row, the root of *kallā* being *kll*. See Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 44f., for a discussion and references of the word; and *ibid.* the statement of Samuel b. Abahu. See also Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 15. Jacob b. Nissim: 32, b, l. 4; and see 30, j., II, 6-8, on Shemariah b. Elḥanan. The blessing: 42. See also: Gafni, *Tarbiz*, 49 (1979/80), 295f., who discusses the *dārā qammā*, in light of BT *Bāvā qammā* 114a where it says of Rav Kahana that he was removed seven rows to the back, and was placed in *bāvā batrā*, the last row, i.e., the seventh; he points out the similarity to what Nathan the Babylonian had to say on this matter, and see there references to earlier studies. Also worthy of mention is the appointment of Ephraim b. Satyā as judge in Mosul by Khalaf b. Sarjāda, see Harkavy, *Zikkārōn*, V, 227; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1932/33), 172, who assumed that if he was appointed as judge he must have had the title *alūf* as well. The gaon Šemah Sedeq b. Isaac (Sura, ca. 990-998) mentions "Master Sahl *alūf*, son of an *alūf*, our attorney in Mosul", see 45, l. 14. *Alūfīm* who became geonim, 4b; see Sherira, *Letter*, 110ff., 119; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 10. On the number of rows see also Epstein, *JQR*, NS 12 (1921/22), 371ff., who writes that three was also the number indicated by talmudic sources, see his references; he also assumes that the custom of the seven rows only was in Sura. Lewin, *JLIG*, 8 (1911), 322, in his article about Sherira Gaon, for some reason held the opposite view, that the custom of seven rows was specific of Pumbedita, not of Sura, and Poznanski, *ZfNB*, 15 (1911), 169f. has already argued with him.

organize one's prayer and then pray. R. Abba said: what Eleazar said is acceptable as far as the blessing on *Rōsh ha-shānā* and *yom ha-kippūrīm* and the *perāqīm* are concerned". Rashi explained the *perāqīm* as: holidays, but it seems the meaning is an assembly at the synagogue, for public prayer. Also: "Marimar and Mar Zūtrā used to meet in groups of ten during the Shabbat of the *riglā* (the assembly at the yeshiva), then would pray and afterwards return to the *pereq*" (BT, *Ber.*, 30a); or: "the exilarch happened to be in Hagrūnya, at the house of R. Nathan. Rafram and all other sages came to the *pereq*, but not Ravīna" (BT, *Yōmā*, 78a; Rashi's interpretation: to the homily). Also: "Marimar (some say: Rav Yemar) said: I happened to be at the *pereq* of R. Pinhās b. R. Amī, and there a *tannā* rose and discussed (the subject, before R. Pinhās) and he confirmed what was said" (BT, *Pes.*, 100a). Also: "Mar Bar Rav Ashī was lecturing at the *pereq*: this is what the Lord my father has said; but its *amōrā* (apparently: who was presiding) said: this is what Rav Ashī said" (BT, *Qidd.*, 31b). Above (sec. 43) we have seen that Mar Zūtrā was appointed *rōsh pereq*, and later even *rōsh sanhedrīn*. This shows that at the end of the talmudic period there still was such a position: *rōsh pereq*, meaning "head of the assembly", with the connotation of chief justice, *av-bēt-dīn*, as in the talmudic passages I cite here. This meaning was conserved even in the Byzantine codes. The Jewish leaders are called there *arkhipherekitai* (the reference being to the heads of the synagogues in the various localities), which obviously is the Greek correspondent to *rāshē perāqīm*. Also, even if some linguists would disagree, I believe there is an etymological connection between *puḥr*, *puḥrai*, discussed above (sec. 61) and *pereq*, *rōsh pereq*. Perhaps Pirqawai (or: Pirqoy) b. Baboy was the designation of a function (not a proper noun) which, in the Persian regions, seems to have meant "head of the synagogue", *av-bēt-dīn*, and sometimes, in older times, even "head of the yeshiva" (see below, sec. 183).

In Sherira Gaon's letter, we find the people of Pumbedita "convoking *perāqīm*", that is, convening meetings and assemblies. In his letter to Yemen, Sherira Gaon uses the term *pereq* as a synonym of *ʿāseret*, obviously meaning: assembly; in another letter, Sherira Gaon uses his characteristic expressions: "in all *perāqīm* that we convoke and all *ʿāṣārōt* that we sanctify". This meaning becomes increasingly obvious from the parallel Arabic version used by Hayy Gaon instead of the above-mentioned "in meetings and assemblies": *fi'l-majālis wa-fi'l-jumūʿ*; *majlis* = assembly. And here, too, there is clear evidence that for them the meaning of *pereq* was indeed an assembly: as is also the meaning of *jamʿ* (plural: *jumūʿ*) which means convention and everything similar to it. The same ornate phrase is found in a letter of Israel ha-Kohen Gaon b. Samuel, who writes (apparently) to the Fustat community: "in all *perāqīm* which we convoke and *ʿāṣārā* (also meaning: assembly) which we sanctify....". In a much later period, in 1191, the gaon Samuel b. Eli writes to Ḥalab in a sort of writ of authority: "and he was given the authority to judge and decide.... and to convene *perāqīm*", etc. In another letter, he writes: "and now, when we arrived at our destination (i.e. Baghdad) we convened a *pereq*", etc. Similar to this was what the exilarch Hezekiah b. David is referring to when he writes to Elḥanan b. Shemariah, that "all those who live in those lands"

(Egypt and Palestine) do not know the "customs of the yeshiva", not even the "custom of the *perāqīm*".

From the available documentation, it appears that the function of the *rōsh ha-pereq* did not exist in the yeshiva in the period under discussion, that is, it is unlikely that there were central figures in the yeshiva who bore that title or fulfilled this function. It seems to me, however, that the title was granted to those personalities whom the yeshiva wanted to favor, and indeed we know of a few personalities in Fustat who bore this title. For instance, there is Nathan b. Abraham, Solomon b. Judah's rival for the seat of gaon in Palestine, who wanted the renewal of this title, which he then granted to Peraḥiah b. Mu'ammal, one of his supporters in Fustat.⁹²

(93) Another title, about which we have little information for the time being, was *rōsh ha-seder*. It crops up in the Babylonian Talmud: "and who is the *rēsh sidrā* (Aramaic) in Babylonia?" (*Hullin* 137b). *Rōsh ha-seder* in Babylonia, according to the anecdotal part of this quotation, was Abā Arikhā, mostly known as Rav. From this the conclusion was (see in the *Tō-sāfōt*, *ibid.*), that *rōsh ha-seder* in the Talmud meant "head of the yeshiva". During the period under discussion, however, it seems that this was primarily a honorific title, granted to important figures in the communities, while as a genuine function, it may have been customarily granted by the exilarchs, which we find in the well-known polemic on the part of the Karaite who wants to prove that there is a great deal of differences and opposition between the Rabbanites themselves, as there are those who ask firstly of the head of the yeshiva in Baghdad and afterwards ask (and get a different opinion) from the exilarch, or the judge of the Gate, or the *rōsh ha-seder*.... It seems that he was referring to the exilarch's "judge of the Gate", and also to the exilarch's *rōsh ha-seder*, and it seems that it was mainly the exilarch who granted this title to personalities who were his favorites. Sherira Gaon writes in his *Letter* that the head (*rēshā*) of the sages

⁹² On *pereq*, cf. Jastrow's *Dictionary*; also: Mann, *Texts*, I, 195, who also indicated the genuine meaning of the word in the Talmud and has a comprehensive discussion on it. Sherira Gaon: 23, c, ll. 13ff. The letter to Yemen: 28, i, l. 26; the other letter: 19, b, ll. 6-7. Hayy Gaon: 38, a, l. 12. Israel Gaon: 65, c, from l. 1. Samuel b. Eli, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (part 2, 1929/30), 61f., ll. 7ff.; (part 3), 18, ll. 18ff. *ʿazārā* has the meaning of synagogue, and Assaf rightly cited what the Palestinian gaon said, about one of his ancestors, Mūsā, "who was killed in the *ʿazārā*"; this, pace Mann (above in this note) who proposed to read: *ba-ʿaṣārā*, as an anonymous critic noted in *Tarbiz*, 1 (part 4, 1929/30), 146, that in the facsimile he read *ba-ʿaṣārā*; but *ba-ʿazārā* seems more plausible, and there might have been a scribal error. From among the earlier discussions of this subject, see Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 18f., who explains *rōsh ha-pereq* as the supervisor of learning a *pereq*, i.e., a chapter, in the Talmud. A more or less similar explanation is found in Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 13; Friedman, *Maimonid. Stud.*, 1 (1990), 6 n. 24; Goitein, *Sidrē ḥinn.*, 128 compares it with Arabic *faṣl*, in the meaning of lesson, or public lecture. The statement of Hezekiah, the exilarch, see: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 45 (no. 27), and see the interpretation of *qāwāʿ pereq* (referring to Elhanan b. Shemariah): convoked the court in Fustat, *idem*, *Hist.*, 578. Abramson, *Sinai*, 49 (1960/61), 210, explains the *she ʿilātā de-firqā* in TS Arabic 18(1).2 (referring to Sel. 1070, AD 758/9) as: queries to the yeshiva. Peraḥiah: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 316f. (no. 184). See the discussion in *idem*, *Hist.*, 505f. Gafni, in *Fleischer Jub. Vol.*, 121ff. tries to prove that *pereq*, *pirqā*, means a public sermon, basing on some of the passages I quoted above, and some additional, from the Talmud; he also adds a quotation from a letter of Sherira Gaon (31 in my corpus): "we do not miss mentioning you in what we say in the yeshiva meetings and in all our *perāqīm* and gatherings"; all these citations do not prove that *pereq* meant sermon, which is rather guesswork, the right interpretation being, as said above, yeshiva, or court, or gathering.

in Babylonia was called *rēsh sidrā* (Aramaic) i.e. he was careful not to say: head of the yeshiva, but according to that citation in the tractate *Hullin*, he understood that Rav was called *rōsh ha-seder* since he was an outstanding scholar. In the *Yūḥasīn* it says: "those *nesī'im* who were there were only called *rōsh sidrā*". In the Geniza documents there are references to several personalities who bore this title, such as Asaf *rōsh ha-seder*, Elḥanan b. Shemiah, Judah b. Joseph, Abraham b. 'Aṭā' (the Qayrawanese *nagid*), and many others as well, in a later period. The title *seḡan* (deputy of the head of) *ha-yeshivā* seems to have been intended primarily to enhance the names of the benefactors and the central figures in the communities. It is found in comparatively later documents, such as in Samuel Gaon b. Eli's letters: "our brother *rabbānā* Ḥananiah, *seḡan ha-yeshivā*".

As to the "sons of the geonim" whom I have mentioned above: both in the Palestinian yeshiva and the Babylonian yeshivot, we find that the geonim rely on their sons to deputize for them and write their letters. At an early age, they introduce them to the inner matters of the yeshiva, and naturally try to sharpen their mastery in the halacha and increase their learning. Saadia Gaon places his eldest son She'ērīt at the head of those in whose name he sends greetings: "Our boy She'ērīt". Samuel b. Hophni writes: "Israel our boy, scribe of the yeshiva". He, as well as his son Israel Gaon, mention among the central figures of the yeshiva the sons of former geonim, who evidently enjoyed a preferential status. And we shall see below the special case of a father and son, the geonim Sherira and Hayy. In those times things were not in accordance with our likings, as we would call it nepotism. The cultivation of a son's talents and his ability to fulfill his father's role and functions appeared desirable and self-understood.⁹³

⁹³ See the Karaite text, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/33), 43f.; cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 107f.; Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1st part, 1929/30), 112 (in the letters there edited "Eleazar b. Šemaḥ *rōsh ha-seder*" is mentioned, i.e., the father, Šemaḥ, had been *rōsh seder*); see Sherira, *Letter*, 78; Weiss, *Dōr*, III, 161, wrote that the title *rōsh ha-seder* was granted to the main teachers in Sura, and, beginning with R. Hūnā (as the *Sefer ha-yuḥasīn* states), it was replaced by *rōsh yeshivā* (Aramaic: *rēsh metivā*), see Zakuto, *Sefer ha-yuḥasīn*, 125f., 199 (in the Warsaw edition, 1878: p. 137); Heilprin, *Sēder*, 100; Halevy, *Dōrōt*, II, 404f., while denying the importance of this book, being a relatively late one, did not grasp the meanings, and concluded that it is the exilarchs (*nesī'im*) who were called *rēsh sidrā*; whereas there in the *Yuḥasīn* it says that it is the exilarchs who granted this title to outstanding scholars. See also: Poznanski, *Riv. isr.*, 5:127, 1908, written following an article of Elbogen, on that issue in that periodical. Poznanski mentions there several persons who had the title *rōsh ha-seder*. A similar list was edited by Abramson (above in this note). See also, for instance, Abraham b. Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*, a witness in a deed of gift given by Abū'l-Ma'ālī Yefet, on Wednesday, 14 Iyyar AM 4810 (1050), in Qayrawān (Bodl MS Heb a 2, f. 23; see Neubauer, *Catal.*, II, no. 2805). R. Hezekiah b. Samuel *rōsh ha-seder*, grandson of Paltoi head of the yeshiva, is mentioned in a responsum sent to Bahlūl b. Joseph, see TS Loan 90, f. 2v, in Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 59; he is mentioned also in 35, l. 1. Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 18, solved the problem in his own way: *rōsh ha-seder* was the supervisor of studying a whole *seder* (order) of the Talmud. See also: Marx, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 771; Ben-Sasson, *Perāqim*, 95; in his view, it is implied, that *rōsh ha-seder* and *rōsh kallā* are the same. *Seḡan ha-yeshivā*, see Assaf, *Tarbiz* 1 (part 2, 1929/30), 81, l. 13, and see *ibid.* (part 1), 113, his argument with Poznanski, who assumed that the title means: chief judge. Saadia Gaon: 8, a, ll. 15-17. Samuel b. Hophni: 51, b, ll. 1ff.; Israel Gaon: 65b. Grossman, *Zion* 50 (1985), 189ff., has a detailed discussion on the "sons of geonim". It seems to me that the differences he believes to detect in this matter between the Palestinian and the Babylonian yeshivot are not conclusive, as the ancient *nesī'ūt* in Palestine was completely hereditary (the house of Hillel).

(94) Contrary to subsequent generations, the yeshiva, this ancient institution which still maintained its customs and orders during the first centuries of Muslim rule, was not a school. Its major functions and status were in the sphere of community leadership, appointments, and community guidance, especially with regard to their law courts, representation, and central public roles. However, there was also a section devoted to learning. This obviously did not include the teaching of children or beginners. We have no information as to the nature of these students, nor their age or numbers. There were undoubtedly people of different ages. The term *talmidīm* was not applied specifically to young people or beginners who wanted to extend their knowledge. It was closer to that of scholars (*talmidē ḥakhāmīm*), and probably included adults, dignitaries, communal leaders, etc., who would participate in the discussions on the halacha. For instance, we find such a man in the person of the Sicilian *dayyān*, Maṣliaḥ b. Eliah, who is discussed elsewhere in this book (sec. 331).

In his story of the yeshivot, Nathan the Babylonian speaks of the case of the son of a *rōsh kallā* who was not qualified to succeed his father after his death and was moved backward to a less prestigious seat (backward compared with his father's place); if he is entitled to sit in one of the seven rows, he should sit there; if not—he should sit “with *benē bē rav* and the rest of the *talmidīm*”. This suggests that there were permanent persons in the yeshiva who were called *benē bē* (= *bēt*) *rav* and there were “the rest of the *talmidīm*”. Mastership in halacha, wisdom, and distinction, had their own reward: the outstanding scholar would receive a larger sum of money or provisions than that which the yeshiva would distribute to its people for their daily existence. The scholars' advance was constantly under the watchful eye of the head of the yeshiva and the greatest indication of advancement would have to come in the *yarḥē kallā* (semi-annual assemblies), which I shall discuss below. It seems that the very right to take part in the yeshiva's discussions and its studies, whether as a permanent scholar or during the assemblies, was considered a great honor, and it is not accidental that we find signatures on letters and deeds stating: “so-and-so the *talmid*”, or “son of so-and-so *bīrabbī*”, which evidently was: *bīr rabbī*, that is, one of the *benē rabbānān*, junior scholars. The mere fact that this status was not available to everyone is substantiated by Nathan the Babylonian's remark that there were some 400 *talmidīm*. It is reasonable to assume that this was a limited number dictated by the yeshiva's physical conditions.

Someone was responsible for the learning body, and it was thought that his title was: *rēsh bē rabbānān*. We find in one of the letters the information that the head of the yeshiva had sent his condolences to the Qayrawān community on the death of Ḥananel b. Ḥushiel (who is *rabbēnū* Hananel), as well as mentioning the appointment of Nissim b. Jacob, *rēsh bē rabbānān*. We may perhaps understand that this refers to the administration of scholastic matters within the community; however, Labrāt b. Moses ibn Sughmār, who was *dayyān* of Mahdiyya, was actually called, in a legal deed from the year 1097: *rēsh bē rabbānān*, which means in that context: the local *av-bēt-dīn*, head of the court.

One can assume that the title *mashnīm* or its Aramaic form: *tannā'im*, belongs to this academic system of teaching, learning and study. Saadia Gaon writes about the permanent *mashnīm* of our Master's house, by which

he probably meant those occupied teaching and guiding in the relevant section in Sura. Sherira Gaon writes: "... the *tannā'im*, who are in charge of teaching. In the original Arabic version of Nathan the Babylonian's story, we read: 'so the *benē bē rav* and the *tannā'im* with all the *talmidim*, went from Sura to a locality called Qaṣr"', where we should interpret the Aramaic and Hebrew terms as meaning: the permanent scholars, all those who pertain to the learning in the yeshiva, those who conduct the studies.

In a letter written in approximately 970, Sherira Gaon complains bitterly about the difficult times which kept the members of the younger generation from attending the *midrash ha-mashnē* (the lessons of the teacher), for economic reasons. Even many of the sons of the *amōrē ha-talmūd* (by which he obviously meant "the best of the scholars") leave their studies and "turn to other occupations to earn their living or leave" (to leave evidently meant to emigrate from Babylonia). In contrast, those who study in the yeshiva devote themselves entirely to the task of studying, preferring to confine themselves (ينقطعوا) for the study of the Torah.⁹⁴

(95) Apparently also another term which was a puzzle to many modern scholars, was the *sāyōmīn*, which also pertains to the subject of learning. The root *sym* has in the Talmud also, and even mainly, the meaning of *gmr*, to finish, as also in modern Hebrew. But in Aramaic, both roots have the meaning of 'to learn', a meaning which is evident in several talmudic passages, as for instance: "some day Rav Papa and Rav Hūnā b. Rav Joshua got hold of Rav Ada b. Abba, because they had not attended the *siyyūmā*", etc. (BT BB 22a), evidently meaning: the lesson. Or, "Resh Laqish was found sitting and *mesayyam* (teaching) the daily lesson in the yeshiva, for the scholars" (BT BQ 117a). In the letters of the geonim and their responsa we find the term *sāyōmīn* (obviously this is the right vocalization, as in the *nomina opificum*), mainly in openings of letters, where the *sāyōmīn* figure among the personalities of the yeshiva in whose name the gaon sends greetings to the addressee. We also find *benē sāyōmē*, *rabbānān de-sāyōmē* (people who learn, scholars-teachers) *shabbāt de-vē sāyōmē* (a Saturday when an assembly of the teaching house took place).

⁹⁴ Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 87f.; cf. what Sherira in his *Iggeret*, 117, wrote about Saadia: "He did not belong to the scholars of the yeshiva, he was from Egypt". Aptowitzer, *HUCA*, 8-9 (1932/32), 425, has citations from geonic responsa, and concludes that the geonim used the term *talmidim* to designate those who added opinions that were unknown to the geonim who wrote the responsa; but this is baseless. *Rōsh bē rabbānān* = chief judge: 625, a, l. 8. See Mann, *Texts*, I, 205f., who stresses the genuine Babylonian nature of this term. The appointment of Nissim b. Jacob: 613; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/34), 290, where he argues with Aptowitzer, who assumed this title to be a Palestinian one; see Mirsky, *Horeb*, 3 (1936/7), 290, who assumes that *bē rabbānān* was the school of the yeshiva. Saadia Gaon: the permanent *mashnīm*, see 8, a, ll. 15-17; Sherira Gaon: 35; the Arabic original of Nathan the Babylonian: 12, lb, l. 12; the Hebrew version, Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, simplified the story: "they all went to meet him until they reached a place called Qaṣr"; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 69, who compares it with the Aḥīma'as Scroll (which, as is known, deals with events at the Palestinian yeshiva): "and to the yeshiva, for the *talmidim* and the *tannā'im*"; there is no doubt that Mann errs when arguing about ties between *tannā'im-mashnīm* (i.e., teachers) and the Mishnā, intending to show that it is the Mishnā that they were studying. Sherira Gaon or the state of the studies: 25. The word *yanqaṭ'ū*: see also 24, l. 48: *nifredū* and see the note *ibid.* See on the word also: Gil, *Foundations*, 250 n. 10.

Rashi explained the above mentioned *mesayyam* (Resh Laqish): "he was repeating and teaching them the commentary of R. Yohanan.... giving them its full understanding", which is quite a correct explanation.

Syriac sources may help us to understand the terms derived from *sym*, and show that they are not connected with the idea of 'to finish'. *Sāyōmā* in Syriac means a scribe, but also a supervisor. 'Amr b. Mattā, in his book on the patriarchs, describing the coronation of the patriarch Elia, in AD 1111, mentions the presence at the ceremony of Sabrīshū^c the metropolitan of Nisibis, who was the *sāyūm* (sic; in Arabic script), where it appears that he was the leader of the ceremony.

We find the *meturgeman* in later sources but one can imagine that this function existed in the yeshivot and also under the exilarch for many generations, as we find it in the talmudic literature and in the *Targum*, as *turgeman* or *meturgeman*. It is mentioned by Petahiah in his *Sibbūv*: "The head of the yeshiva sits on the ground and he tells the *meturgeman*, who tells the *talmīdīm*, and they ask the *meturgeman*, and if he does not know, he asks the head of the yeshiva, and one *meturgeman* repeats the tractate to one side, and another one repeats another tractate to the other side". And it is the *meturgeman* who used to open the proceedings, before the sermon, with the announcement: "hearken you to what the head of the yeshiva (or: the exilarch) intends to say"; or: "hearken you to what he intends to say, and obey what *marūtā b. marūtā*, the exilarch son of exilarch, Lord of the nation, leader of the nation.... our king and *nāsī* Ḥisdai the great *nāsī* head of the whole diaspora of Israel is telling".⁹⁵

4. The studies

(96) We have seen how the yeshiva was set up to cope with its scholastic activities, although these were not at the core of the yeshiva's concerns. However they were characteristic of the yeshiva and even an essential element in their make-up. We have no precise details about the learning process within the yeshiva and would like to know who of the younger generation succeeded in reaching the level of studies in the yeshivot; or perhaps those who were pursuing their studies there were adult scholars of different

⁹⁵ See Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 342, and *Oṣar ha-g.* to *Berākhōt*, 128, n. 11; Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 204; 32, b; *Oṣar ha-g.* to *Yevāmōt*, 19 (par. 42); see also the version corrected by Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 15 (1943/44), 210; Lewin, *Metivōt*, xxi-xxii, 101 n. 6; Rashi to *Bāvā qammā* 117a; the interpretation of Lewin in *Oṣar ha-g.* to *Berākhōt*, above in this note, and his many references to talmudic sources and to responsa; see also *idem*, in *Sefer Met.*, xxi-xxii; 101; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 45. Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 87f.; Syriac, see the *Dictionary* of Payne Smith; 'Amr b. Mattā, 103; it says in the continuation that another Sabrīshū^c, the bishop of 'Ukbarā, served at that ceremony as *nāzir*, probably meaning: supervisor. See *Oṣar ha-g.* to *Nedārīm*, 62 (no. 155); to *Bāvā qammā*, 74. See Krauss, *Hazofeh*, 7 (1922/23), 266ff., who explains *sāyōmē*, following Poznanski, as "those who sit in the remotest rows". See the article by Rosenthal, *Tarbiz*, 49 (1979/80), 52, who has a collection of the sources. The *meturgemān*, see Petahiah, 8; Assaf, *Tarbiz*, I (part 1, 1929/30), 111; *idem*, *Ginzē q.*, IV, 63ff.; Sherira, *Iggeret*, 111, tells of the dispute between the two candidates to the office of gaon: "as the cantor stood up and announced: hearken ye to what the yeshiva heads (i.e., plural) have in mind to say, all the Jews wept". See a Bodleian fragment, in Mann, *Jews*, II, 104: "Hearken ye to what our Master the *segan ha-yeshivā*, *rosh kallā*, *hāvēr*, intends to say".

ages and levels, such as I have described above. According to ancient Palestinian tradition, the term *talmid* did not simply mean a student, but it also was a kind of title (and indeed we find that during the geonic period, there were personalities who referred to themselves as *ha-talmid*, or added this by-name to that of their father): "and after them people came who were *talmidim* and became *havērim* (scholars), like R. Akiva", is stated in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*. Nathan the Babylonian describes in the main, the method of supervision on the learning people, under the direction of the head of the yeshiva, who would 'test' what the students have been learning during the four sabbaths of the month of Adar, that is, in one of the *yarḥē kallā*. According to Nathan the Babylonian, the floor was generally taken by people of "the first row". It was the latter who would discuss the point at issue while the rest were silent. When differences of opinion arose, it would be the same row which discussed them "between themselves". The head of the yeshiva sums up the subject: "he reads and they listen". It should be remembered that Nathan's remarks were translated from the Arabic, and that when he says 'read', this was in the Arabic sense, which also means: to teach. In the continuation, the gaon questions the assembly on the subject being studied and the halacha related to it, followed by a detailed disputation led by the gaon. Most of the examination on a personal level takes place on the fourth sabbath, when the gaon "examines and interrogates them until he has spotted the better ones". The backward student is punished: the reward he has been promised is reduced and the financial support (perhaps the food) provided by the yeshiva is withheld. The negligent student is also warned against further laziness, "which may result in his receiving naught". At the end of the *kallā*, the gaon informs those who are sitting in the rows (that is, the seventy scholars who constitute the yeshiva) what the study plan for the period until the next *kallā* is, so that each of them should study this material at home, while "the rest of the *talmidim* should each study whatever tractate they prefer". Added to this we also have Sherira Gaon's comment in his *Letter*. "This is what our sages established, to learn each year two tractates, more or less, so as to conclude the study of the (whole) Talmud in thirty years" (and Rav Ashī, who headed the yeshiva for sixty years, restudied with his people the Talmud twice). The yeshivot served as the pivot of a world-wide alignment of study and learning in the Jewish communities in the diaspora. Local houses of learning (*battē midrāsh*) existed in every community and the best scholars in these localities would supervise the studies. Most of the literature of the queries and responsa bears evidence of these widespread activities, and it is clear that only a fraction of the queries dealt with everyday life, or matters for which the local court could not find the right decision. There were many queries relating to abstract legal studies, be it in the domain of halacha studied in the local *bēt midrāsh*, or linguistic questions connected with the talmudic literature, or even the interpretation of difficult passages in the Bible. Apart from the many letters reaching the yeshiva asking for clarification, people from various localities would come to the yeshiva for a prolonged or a shorter stay. There was also the established custom of *yarḥē*, "the months of *kallā*". We have seen above that *kallā* meant a round row in the yeshiva. In the expression *yarḥē kallā* there is another meaning to *kallā*,

which is assembly. In those times, the root *kl*, in the passive, served in the meaning of 'to gather'.

It is obvious that staying in the yeshiva was considered preferable to writing letters, which was how the geonim viewed it, and there are explicit remarks to this effect from Sar Shālōm Gaon b. Boaz, the Sura gaon (in approximately 850), who was asked about the halacha related to the wine of the gentiles, and replied:

These *halākhōt* are entangled in each other, and obscure; if God wanted it so and you were with us, it would be possible to interpret them properly, one by one, in an orderly way, since when the pupil sits with his teacher and discusses a matter of *halākhā*, the teacher knows which argument appeals to him, what he ignores and what is clear, or what his stumbling block is, and clarifies the matter until he understands it, and explains until he understands the rule; but in writing, how much can one explain? Just a little. We have ordered that you are sent the rules of the gentiles' wine.

Similarly, what ʿAmram Gaon wrote:

Do know that you are very important, dear, and honored in our eyes, and we rejoice with your queries, and as long as we see your wisdom and intelligence, and the precision in dealing with tradition and (scholarly) opinions and casuistry, we say thanks and praises to God, who bestowed upon you wisdom and intelligence and knowledge and perspicacity; may He enable you to discuss and participate in the struggle of the Torah. And we much deplore and regret that our sins caused you to be far away from the yeshiva; since if you were at the yeshiva, both we and you would have much increased our wisdom and intelligence.

There are a number of references to *yarhē kallā* that supplement and augment the feeling that this custom did indeed exist, and that at planned times in the months of Adar and Elul men would assemble for a biannual summary, studying and delving into the Talmud tractates. Mattathias Gaon, in 863, wrote of the queries that reached him "in the month of Nisan on the eve of Passover.... after the masters (*alūfīm*), scholars (*hakhāmīm*) and students (*talmīdīm*) had departed safely for their homes". Therefore, this is clear testimony about the *kallā* in Adar. Furthermore, Sherira Gaon writes to the Maghrib, "that the masters and scholars" were 'assembled' (from places outside the yeshiva), "studied the *kallā* tractate, then began a discussion of another tractate", the objective being—as in the story of Nathan the Babylonian—to examine the progress and degree of study. "Hayy our boy" teaches them "the way of the query", the study method of the sages of yore, through the generations and into gaonic times as well. This, the gaon writes, was according to the finest family tradition he received from his father and grandfather (the geonim Ḥananiah and Judah). The gaon continues: "To see what they had studied and what they learned when seated (i.e., in the yeshiva) and if they studied more we would honor them, and if they were lazy we would instill them with fear".

Another important custom in the system of study and clarification of *hā-lākhōt* was the *shuvta de-riglā* (i.e., the Saturday of the gatherings). From the meager information available it would appear that these were Sabbath gatherings held jointly by the three institutions of the Babylonian leadership, the two yeshivot and the exilarch. In early times these assemblies

were held at the seat of the exilarch and at Neharde^a. However, when R. Ashī Gaon(!) was in Mātā Maḥsiya' after R. Pāpā (after AD 375 or 376), when the synagogue was reestablished (*Bāvā Batrā* 3b), they decided that there would be *riglē we-ta'aniyātā* (gatherings and fast-days) at Sura, and that the exilarch and the Pumbeditans would have to take the trouble to get there. That was the custom, Sherira Gaon writes, "until two hundred years ago". In other words, he wished to say that until approximately the end of the 8th century, the Sabbath of the exilarch took place in Sura, and the Pumbedita men were required to attend. With the lowered status of the exilarch, which began at that time and reached a low point at the end of the first quarter of the ninth century, Pumbedita's status rose, and the exilarch's *riglā* moved to Pumbedita.⁹⁶

5. The appointments

(97) We do not have a clear picture of how the gaon, the head of the yeshiva, was appointed. In his *Letter*, Sherira Gaon uses the term *semikhā*, when listing the appointment of the geonim. "The sages agreed to appoint our Lord and Master Nathan *alūf*, the brother of my father, our Lord and Master Judah Gaon.... as gaon of Maḥsiya', in order that his name be not erased". No details are given—who the scholars were, who decided, how many they were, etc., and the issue is left entirely to our imagination. In another place he uses passive language: ".... after him, our Lord and Master Aaron, b. our Lord and master Joseph ha-Kohen, although he did not belong to the people of the yeshiva, but was rather one of the merchants...." And further: "In the year (Sel.) 1279 (AD 968) I was appointed as gaon and I appointed Hayy my son as head of the Court, some two years ago". It would seem, therefore, that the head of Court was appointed by the gaon.

As to the judges, they were appointed by the yeshivot and also by the exilarch (I dealt with this above), all according to their zones of authority. In the communities under the authority of the gaon, the gaon would grant the judge a *pitqā de-dayyanūtā*, a letter of appointment as judge.

This is what Harkavy cites from a responsum in manuscript:

⁹⁶ See the description of the study by Nathan the Babylonian, in: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 87f., and by Sherira, *Letter*, 12, 93f. On the term *kallā* see the cogent discussion of Hildesheimer, *J. Freimann Festschr.*, 58, 62f.; less plausible is the interpretation of Krauss, *Tarbiz*, 20:123, 1949/50. The responsum of Sar Shālōm: *Tesh. geon. qadm.*, 9a (no. 46); 'Amram: in Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 46 (=MS Antonin no. 308, fol. 2b); see the opinions of Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 302, 326; Epstein, *Simchoni Mem. Vol.*, 137 n. 3; Mann, *Texts*, I, 65, see his opinion on the authorship of these two responsa. Mattathias Gaon: TS 20.183, a, margin right, ll. 18ff., ed. Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 144; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 447 n. 9; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 66 n. 10. Sherira Gaon: 23, c, ll. 7ff. Goitein, *Sidrē h.*, 161 n. 210, reads *be-shabbatām* instead of *be-shivtām*, explaining: on the Sabbath on which they were examined; but the matter is of *yarhē kallā*, after they have stood for five months in their homes. See also Groner, *Alei sefer*, 8 (1980), 18, in the text of the responsa quire (fol. 8b): "on this *kelālā* (=kallā) of Elul of the year Sel. 1308 (AD 997), when we studied *mī she-hāyā nāsiy* at the yeshiva", etc. (Sherira was then the gaon and his son Hayy the chief judge.) So we see that *kelālā-kallā* mean a gathering, as explained *supra*. See the statements of an anonymous gaon, who mentions the "children of Israel, who gather before us in each and every *kallā*", MS HUC 2, ed. Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 249ff. *Shuvtā de-riglā*: Sherira, *Letter*, 90ff.

Thus we have seen that the custom in Babylonia was that the Great Court appoints judges in every district and writes for the judge a letter of authority, called *pitqā de-dāyyanūtā*, formulated as follows: "We appointed so-and-so as judge is such-and-such locality, and granted him the authority to judge, and to supervise all matters of (religious) commandments, either forbidding or permitting, or belonging to the fear of God. Whoever would not accept to submit to the legal decision is liable to undergo whatever befits him, as prescribed by Heaven".

There is a basic discussion of the appointments issue in a later period in a letter from Baghdad by the gaon, Samuel b. Eli, to the Damascus community in February 1191. In his view, the yeshiva, the *nesī'im*, the heads of the courts, were always authorized to grant ordination. There is indeed a dictum that there is no ordination outside Palestine, but "these are matters related to laws of *qenāsōt* (fines; more or less, this means criminal law); but for matters of deeds and loans the appointments (in the Diaspora) are valid". Further: "And this principle which we have formulated is attested by the custom of the heads of the yeshivot in Babylonia since the days of our Lord Rav and until this day". He also notes "what was said by our Lord Hayy and other geonim, in their own handwriting, in this matter". Then he announces there that he had appointed his son-in-law, Zechariah b. Berakhel as "candidate for the yeshiva (meaning probably that he was to succeed him as gaon) and worthy of judging and instructing.... (as) head of the Court of the yeshiva". Maimonides, who was an opponent of Samuel b. Eli, did indeed see the issue, in principle, in a similar manner: "The laws of *qenāsōt*, such as robbery and injuries and double indemnity and quadruple and quintuple indemnity and the rapist and the seducer, etc., are not judged except by three experts, who are to be ordained in Palestine; but the other laws, the monetary ones, such as deeds and loans, do not need experts, just three laymen or even one expert can judge them". In his *Mishnā* commentary Maimonides extended the ordination prerogative to the exilarch as well, and even gave him priority over Palestine.

He who grants authority is the exilarch, who is the leader in Babylonia, and he is not required to be a scholar. But the leader in Palestine is the head of the yeshiva, and he is required to be very learned in matters of *halākhā*, so that there is definitely no one more perfect than he at the time of his appointment. If this judge was granted jurisdiction over the Palestinian yeshiva, this jurisdiction will serve him only in Palestine, and not abroad; but if he was granted jurisdiction by the exilarch, it will be valid everywhere, both in Palestine and abroad since the authority of the exilarch over the Jews is as the supremacy of a ruler, who enforces and rules, for such is what God called him: a sceptre, as is written "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah", etc. (Gen. 49:10).

A precise description of the situation in Baghdad is that of Petahiah of Regensburg, who attests that the head of the yeshiva, Samuel b. Eli, was authorized to appoint judges "in all of the land of Assyria and Damascus and the cities of Persia and Media and the Land of Babylonia". "He is heeded (his seal is valid) in all the lands and in Palestine". The degree of the Baghdad gaon's rule is also evinced by the appointment, kind of a power of attorney, that he granted his son-in-law Zechariah b. Berakhel: "he will appoint cantors and teachers and suitable *parnāsīm* and guardians

of the court in every locality.... and he will properly look into matters of *heqdēsh* properties”.

Benjamin of Tudela saw the matter slightly differently. According to him, the exilarch (Daniel b. Ḥisdai) “grants ordination to the head of the yeshiva” (one version does not contain the word ‘head’ and the text may have been: “the men of the yeshiva”). Below, we will be examining whether the local judges dealt only with deeds and loans (i.e., civil matters) and not with *qenāsōt*, etc. Nevertheless, it seems that there was a somewhat nebulous consciousness that it was desirable for the judge to also have a writ of appointment from the exilarch, even if he did not belong to his jurisdiction. In this way it may be possible to understand what Elijah ha-Kohen, a local judge, writes about 1030, that he had a writ of appointment from both the previous and the more recent Babylonian yeshivot, and also from Hezekiah the exilarch and R. Hayy. It is certainly not incidental that the writ of appointment issued by the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir on May 15, 1209, for Daniel b. Eleazar, head of the Baghdad yeshiva, does not mention his authority to make judge (or other) appointments in the communities. Stated in the writ of appointment, is that the status granted to him is equal to that which Ibn al-Dastūr, i.e., Samuel b. Eli, had in his time. This should be seen as the typical conservative pattern of the official documents of the Muslim rulers, i.e., which preserved the extant customs from generation to generation. Therefore, the absence of the authority to make appointments undoubtedly had a fundamental meaning, a vestige of the days when this authority belonged—at least in the eyes of the rulers—to the traditional prerogative of the exilarch.⁹⁷

6. *Monies*

(98) Since the yeshivot were the main focus of the leadership of the Babylonian communities and many other Diaspora communities, their expectations of financial support from the communities is understandable. Indeed, financial matters and appeals to the (local) liaisons of the yeshivot have an important place in the preserved letters. Our information in this area is mainly from the Maghrib and Egypt, but there is no doubt that there was no less of a correspondence about money issues between the yeshivot and many communities in other countries.

The yeshivot’s income derived from two main sources: (a) *hōq* (law) or *rāshūt* (authority), these were the appellations of the funds that reached the yeshivot on a regular basis from the communities. They were part of the fees for various court documents, and part of the fees levied on ritual

⁹⁷ See Sherira, *Letter*, 117, 120, 121; Harkavy, *REJ*, 5 (1882), 206; Harkavy, *Resp.*, 80 (no. 180); see *ibid.*, 355 his opinion that the source of it is Hayy Gaon. The *pīṭqā de-day-yānūtā* is called in the *Sefer ha-sheṭ* of Judah of Barcelona, 34, *yifteqā de-rashawātā*, already mentioned above. See Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (part 2, 1929/30), 80-83 (fol. 18aff.). See Maimonides’ *Code*, *Sanhedrin* 5:8; his *Commentary*, to *Bekhōrōt*, 4:4 (the Kafah ed.); to *Sanhedrin*, 1:3, where he has a discussion on matters of *semikha*, but there he does not mention the exilarch. See Petahiah, 10; see Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (part 1, 1929/30), 119, 126; Benjamin of Tudela (Adler ed.), 41. Elijah ha-Kohen’s letter: 73, a, ll. 31-38. The writ of appointment of Daniel b. Eleazar: Ibn al-Sāṭi, 268; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 37f.

slaughtering. Nathan the Babylonian notes that under the Sura jurisdiction the ritual slaughterers (*ṭabbāḥīm*; apparently the lost part of the Arabic original had: *dhabbāḥūn*) paid a quarter dinar a week to the yeshiva. This, it would seem, was also the custom in Pumbedita (so in the Arabic original, and in the printed Hebrew version: a quarter *zūz*, to the head of the yeshiva; actually some used the term yeshiva, or *metīvā* instead of "yeshiva head"). According to Petahiah, in the later period every Babylonian Jew paid one dinar a year to the head of the yeshiva. The term *ḥōq*, had a dual meaning: the regular payments to the yeshiva, but also what the yeshiva paid to its people. Thus Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, for instance, in the famous story of the four captives: "The income (*ḥōq*) of the yeshivot, which was to come from Spain, the Maghrib, Ifrīqiya, Egypt and Palestine was discontinued". Whereas Nathan the Babylonian writes that the *rāshūt* of Sura had an income of 190 dinars a year from Wāsiṭ and its environs; from Baṣra and its environs: 300; according to him, Sura's total annual income amounted to about 1,500 dinars, only from the *ḥūqīm* (not including vows and contributions). (b) Vows and contributions; the yeshivot were one of the consecrated objectives that had a special status in the granting of funds, for they were considered a substitute for the Temple, such as was also charity for the indigent or contributions to the synagogue. Therefore, vows of money for the yeshiva were made publicly, at the synagogue, or sums of money would be recorded which one of the sides in an agreement undertook to pay as a fine to the yeshiva if he broke the agreement. Aside from these, legacies were recorded in deathbed wills, because a bequest to the yeshiva was an act of fear of Heaven for which there was reward in the world to come.

Furthermore, Nathan the Babylonian writes, at a time of financial distress the yeshivot appealed to the communities requesting special urgent help. In fact, many of the letters sent by the yeshivot dealt precisely with this; they would contain a description of their plight, paucity of means as opposed to their many needs, with an emphasis on the importance of the assistance and the divine reward reserved for the donor. These letters were referred to as "letters of the *rāshūyōt* (authorities)", as distinct from responsa on issues of *halākhā*. The following is attributed to the gaon Naṭrūnai: "Such is the matter with the letters of the *rāshūyōt*. Our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai wrote that he dispatched to Mr. Nathan b. Hanīna to Qayrawān and to all the Jewish communities: when Mr. Eleazar *rēsh kallā* arrived and brought a sum of money, we acquitted some of our debts and the situation of the yeshivot improved". Isaac Ṣemaḥ Gaon b. Palṭoi (Pumbedita 872-888) urged the people of Fustat to send their contributions via Damascus: "Any contribution of theirs should be sent to us immediately by R. David and R. Mevasser from Damascus, as they are in charge of the yeshivot". People of the yeshiva appointed as trustees on matters of monies and their dispatch, were called *ne'emānīm* (trustees) of the yeshiva. They were usually wealthy merchants, as we shall see below.

The time-honored tradition concerning the distribution of funds for the yeshivot was that Sura received two thirds and Pumbedita a third. This, of course, pertains to monies not earmarked for one of the two. It appears that the difficult conditions prevailing in Sura in the tenth century, led Pumbedita to press for a change in this arrangement, and it was indeed decided at a time we cannot determine that henceforth the funds would be equally dis-

tributed between the two yeshivot. In fact, there is a letter to Qayrawān, of about 850, complaining strongly about the unjust treatment of Pumbedita in fund allocation, and also lauding its superiority because it had more distinguished scholars.

Part of the funds that reached the yeshivot were given to the gaon. This was kind of a salary for the gaon, and there were certainly some rules about these matters that we do not know of. There is Nathan the Babylonian's statement about the issue when writing about the removal of Joseph b. Jacob b. Saṭyā from the gaonate: "Nevertheless, the *hōq* (payment) which he would take while he was head of the yeshiva was not forestalled from him". Amram Gaon b. Sheshnā clearly confirms that he took five of the ten dinars sent to the yeshiva for himself: "Amram b. Sheshnā, head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsiya, to our Lord Isaac b. Simeon, who is loved and respected by us and by the entire yeshiva.... greetings from us and from R. Šemaḥ, Head of the Court, and the *alūfīm* and the scholars of the yeshiva and members of the yeshiva of the city of Mātā Maḥsiya".... R. Jacob b. R. Isaac has dispatched to us ten dinars sent by you for the yeshiva, five for us and five for the yeshiva treasury, so we ordered that benediction be said for you", etc. Actually, this partition may have been a directive of that Isaac b. Simeon, yet there is some doubt about the matter. In a letter sent in 953, a member of a Pumbedita gaonate family ("grandson of Ṭōv"), a maternal cousin of Sherira and of the party opposed to the current gaon, Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, states that they had no *rāshūyōt* (revenues) from which to bring "our daily bread, for they are desolate; and from what remained we ourselves have had to go out towards them after there were some great ones of the yeshiva, judges, who were leaving our jurisdiction" (this issue is unclear, it appears to be distorted, in all events it reflects a dispute over the authority to appoint judges). He writes further: "The lands that we had possessed have been made desolate and have been lost in those bad years that we endured, our money and our land have been diminished to naught". This text well reflects the great degree of mixing of public funds, the yeshivot funds, and what the families of the geonim, who usually constituted a faction in the yeshiva, deducted for themselves, for clearly he is not writing in the yeshiva's name, but in that of his family—his party.

Nehemiah Gaon, in one of his letters, complains about a disruption of funds arriving at the yeshiva. The letter was written in November 962, not long after the death of the preceding gaon, Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph. In letters written not long afterwards he reiterates and requests the "contributions, the *pesiqōt* (regular grants) and the *ḥumashīm*" (fifths, a term from earlier times referring to regular payments for the yeshiva). His opponent in the yeshiva, Sherira, before his appointment as gaon, writes, at about 962, of money matters to one of the wealthy men in Fustat whose name has not been preserved. He notes that in the days of the preceding gaon, Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (who died two years earlier), funds would arrive from the Maghrib via the correspondent, and the gaon would also give some "to us and the scholars". On the other hand, the present gaon and his family, descendants of Kohen Šedeq (meaning Nehemiah and Hophni) are wicked "hard-hearted grumblers". He writes of himself and his son (Hayy): "We the oppressed.... our properties have been made desolate". None of the funds sent from the Maghrib and Egypt were given to them.

The other side of the picture can be seen in a number of letters of merchants in the first half of the eleventh century, for, in fact, it was the merchants acting as "*peqīdīm* (attorneys) of the yeshiva" who dealt with transferring them money. Thus, for example, writes Moses b. Samuel b. Jāmi^c of Qābis to Joseph b. ^cAwkal in Fustat, mentioning money sent for the yeshiva by Samuel b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrī, who left Qayrawān in a caravan and was delayed at Qābis on his way to Fustat, but left Qābis before the caravan's departure so as not to travel on the Sabbath. Information about a seizure of funds imposed in Fustat on money sent from the Maghrib for the yeshivot, is found in letters by the *benē* (sons of) Berekhiah at about 1020, to Joseph b. ^cAwkal, in Fustat. In another letter sent from the Maghrib to Joseph b. ^cAwkal there is a request for a transfer of funds to Dōsā, Saadia Gaon's son, at the yeshiva (the letter was written before Dōsā was appointed gaon), apparently thanks to his descent. There is also news of about 150 dinars collected in Qayrawān for the yeshivot.

Being a *pāqīd* or *ne'emān*, or *gizbār* (trustee, or treasurer) of a yeshiva was surely considered to be a great honor. In fact, we find that only the most important merchants about whom we know from commercial letters in the Geniza, were granted this honor. The appointments were granted in a special letter from the head of the yeshiva, such as what Samuel b. Hophni wrote to Qayrawān: "We hereby inscribe officially to trusteeship and treasurer to our wise Mr. Joseph the *ḥāvēr*, *seḡan* (deputy) of the yeshiva and its trustee, b. Mr. Berekhiah".

In the second half of the twelfth century, Petahiah of Regensburg found the gaon, Samuel b. Eli, virtually steeped in wealth: He has about sixty slaves, dresses in "attire, golden and colorful as a king's, and his palace is bedecked with tapestry like a king's". This description by a temporary guest contradicts the content of Samuel b. Eli's letters, where the latter complains about the yeshiva's dire state and notes that they are forced to borrow at interest from the Muslims. This is what he writes, for instance, to the communities in Syria, in Siwan of 1509 (Sel., AD 1191): "You know our distress, the burden of our debts upon us and upon our son, the Head of the Court.... and how we pay interest to the gentiles; so liberate us from the yoke of our debts...."

Assaf was being exonerative. He assumed that the contradiction derived from the time differential (perhaps fifteen years) between Petahiah's visit and those letters. Yet there is room for casting doubt on the justification for this assumption. In one of his letters, that of February 1152, to an unidentified community, Samuel b. Eli insisted upon making sure that regular payments were sent for the yeshiva, just as all the communities were obligated to do. In another of his letters he expresses grievance about the meager funds arriving from the addressed community, while "all the Jewish communities in every place make payments from each and every person to the yeshiva.... and here in this year of 1498 (Sel., in Marheshwan; October or November AD 1186) we have sent the judge Jacob b. Mr. Eli to you.... whoever will contradict and stiffen the neck will be put under ban by our disciple the judge". See also the letter of Tishri 1518 (Sel.; September AD 1206) with the request:

By your grace, please make the effort and try to gather whatever you can and summarize the income in a court document (that is, an official statement about the income), and send it via a trustworthy man, for we are in great need of it and we long for it.

This tradition of regular payments for the yeshiva can also be seen in the order of appointment issued by Caliph al-Nāṣir to the head of the Baghdad yeshiva, Daniel b. Eleazar b. Hibat Allah, on 15 May 1209. It states, among other things, that the Jews of Baghdad and elsewhere in Iraq are obliged to pay him all the taxes (*rusūm*) customary in the areas under his jurisdiction and are forbidden to refuse to do so.

A number of the testimonies that I have presented here from the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries, are not only characteristic of that time, but were undoubtedly customary throughout all the gaonic generations. The communities were obliged to support the yeshiva, and the yeshiva heads devoted considerable time assuring the sources of funds and the existence of the yeshivot and their activities.⁹⁸

7. Right and left

(99) As we shall see in a number of places in this book, there were ups and downs in the history of the two Babylonian yeshivot, and vacillations in the status of the one in relation to the other. At the outset, Sura is clearly superior, Pumbedita's star rising around the middle of ninth century and even surpassing that of Sura. The latter rises again under Saadia Gaon, declines

⁹⁸ Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 86f.; see the Arabic source, in matters of monies: 12, II, a, ll. 12-13, 19-22. See the entry *abās* in the additions to the *ʿa-rūkh* of Samuel b. Jacob Ibn Jāmi^c, in Buber, *Grätz Jubelschr.*, Hebrew part, 17. Cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 448; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 64, n. 4. See *ibid.*, from MS Harkavy, L no. 11, the responsum of Naḥshōn Gaon (Sura, 872-879), ll. 20ff., praising Nathan b. Hananiah (=Ḥanīnā), of the Qayrawān's community notables, in whose times one was not allowed to address queries simultaneously to both Sura and Pumbedita; pace Mann *ibid.*, there is no need to correct into *wa-nayīḥa meṭivtā*; it is *wa-rā'īḥa* i.e., the yeshiva recovered. As to Eleazar *rōsh kallā*, he is probably Eleazar *alūf* b. Samuel from Alisāna (=Lucena), mentioned previously. The responsum referring to Isaac Ṣemaḥ Gaon: Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 76f., ll. 14ff. The letter from Pumbedita: 4b. The income of the gaon: Poznanski, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/13), 400, who argues there with Ginzberg. ^aAmram Gaon: *Seder rav ʿamram*, 1 (in Frumkin's ed.: "...the scholars of the yeshiva and the people of our yeshiva and of Mātā maḥsiyā", is probably erroneous). The grandson of Tōv, see 13, g. Nehemiah's letters: 14-18. *Hōmesh*, as against Arabic *khums*, plural: *akhmās*; the Hebrew term belongs to mishnaic Hebrew. See the assumption of Krauss, *Hazofeh*, 7 (1922/23), 253, that *ḥumāshim* meant five dinars paid to the gaon for each deed. Sherira's letter: 20. Moses Ibn Jāmi^c: 142; the sons of Berekhiah: 149; the other letter to Ibn ʿAwkal: 198. Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1962), 163, conjectured that in 198, l. 30, it says: *lil-maqādīsa* (to the Jerusalemites) but the correct restoration is: *li-sayyidnā dōsā*, which can be proven also by what is said there in continuation; therefore one has to correct what he wrote *ibid.*, 160, and also Ben-Sasson, *Shalem*, 5 (1987), 59. Also, not *semōl*, left, is written there, but *shemū'el*, who is Samuel b. Hophni, which countermands what Ben-Sasson concludes, *ibid.*, as well in *H.H. Ben-Sasson Mem. Vol.*, 173 n. 86. The correct version is preserved in a Geniza fragment of Sherira's *Letter*, where the reading is *mi-ṣetar ʿarīshā*, the right side of the bench, left empty in expectation for Elijah the prophet; cf. Gil, *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/91), 302 n. 52. Samuel b. Hophni: 52; Petahiah, 10, 22; cf. Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1st part, 1929/30), 118; (2nd part), 70. The letter to the community: *ibid.* (3rd part), 21 ff.; the letter of 1186/87: *ibid.* (2nd part), 58; 1206: *ibid.*, 46. See Ibn al-Sāʿī, 268.

in the second half of the tenth century and rises again around 990 under the gaon Ṣemah Ṣedeq b. Isaac, and his successor, the gaon Samuel b. Hophni, due as well to the considerable financial assistance arranged by the nagid of the Maghrib, Abraham b. ʿAṭāʾ.

Unlike what is generally believed, Sura was not the more ancient yeshiva. Pumbedita was indeed the successor of Nehardeʿa, the first Babylonian yeshiva, and Sura was established only at the beginning of the third century AD, when Rav left for Babylonia. The first connection between Sura and Palestine was maintained over the generations, as can be seen here and there in the sources, and some researchers have threshed it out even when less obvious.

Sherira Gaon was less knowledgeable about the history of Sura than about his own yeshiva, Pumbedita. Nevertheless, he knew enough to tell us about Sura's erstwhile ascendancy and its special connection with the exilarch. The *shuvtā de-riḡlā* in the Sabbath of the pericope *Lēkh* (about the middle of Marheshwan—October or November; it is not clear whether this was the only *shuvtā de-riḡlā*) was held in Sura, and the heads of the Pumbedita yeshiva were required to attend because it was the seat of most of the exilarchs. We find that Sura was then more stable than Pumbedita. Until 930, Sura had nineteen geonim, while Pumbedita had thirty-two. In that early period the exilarch was also more involved in the affairs of Pumbedita. Sherira Gaon describes that involvement as though derived from despotism and arbitrariness, especially when describing, laconically, as was his habit, the appointment of Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah to the Pumbedita gaonate (719). Naṭrūnai "had a family connection with the exilarch", and persecuted the people of Pumbedita (Sherira apparently means his ancestors of about ten generations earlier) to such an extent that some of the yeshiva's scholars were forced to seek refuge in Sura.

It would appear that Sura's supremacy was expressed in those generations by the fact that most of the relations with the Diaspora communities outside of Babylonia were indeed with Sura; by which I mean relations developed after the political consolidation following the Muslim conquest and the surge of traffic between countries previously under Byzantine control and areas under that of Persia. However, three generations passed before these distant communities, in the Maghrib and Spain, began to preserve responsa of the Babylonian geonim. This is when communication between the far West and Babylonia was first established whereas, according to tradition, North Africa and Spain had rather been linked for generations with the Palestinian center. As Malter has already shown, most of the responsa preserved in the Geniza, such as those of which Ginzberg edited as *Geonica*, except for the responsa of the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh centuries (Sherira and Hayy), are attributed to the Sura geonim, who were active in the ninth century: Moses b. Jacob (c. 820-830), Sar Shālōm b. Boaz (c. 861-872), and Naḥshōn (c. 872-879). However, this is not proof that it was more of a period of special growth than the previous generations, only that more responsa of these geonim had been preserved, due to Babylonia's growing connections with the western countries.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ The priority of Nehardeʿa: Sherira, *Letter*, 72; Sherira is not to be suspected of exaggeration for having belonged to Pumbedita; cf. Lewin, *Meṭivōt*, i-iv (in the introduction);

(100) Pumbedita's clear ascendancy begins somewhere around the middle of the ninth century. Without arguing for a proven causal connection, one should remember and note that its ascendancy was preceded by the conflict between David and Daniel (above, secs. 79-81) which had a dual outcome: excessive governmental intervention in the administration of Jewish affairs and the organizational freedom granted to dissidents, and internally, the dismissal of a branch of the exilarchic dynasty, that of Ḥisdai-^cAnan—a dismissal which began in Babylonia and continued in Palestine. The rise of Pumbedita and decline of Sura is, therefore, as stated, a salient event of that period, the mid-ninth century. The remnants of that rise begin to appear in the form of some letters that have been preserved in the Geniza. About 850, a central Pumbedita figure, Hayy b. David, I believe, writes to the people in Qayrawān, emphasizing the advantage of Pumbedita over Sura, because of its seven *alūfīm* (he notes the names of four of them, who later became geonim, as I have mentioned above). They sit in the first *dūr* (row) of the yeshiva and there are many "wise elder scholars", while Sura does not even have a fourth of their number; not only that, half of the people of Sura are from the partisans of Daniel who is of the "seed of Ḥisdai the *nāsī*". This might contain somewhat of an explanation for Sura's decline, in other words, that dispute of David and Daniel took place with great intensity in the Sura yeshiva, leading to rifts and the departure of some of its scholars. This letter apparently belongs to the time when Sar Shālōm b. Boaz was gaon in Sura. We have found that the following gaon, Naṭrūnai b. Hillai (whose gaonate began about 853) came out strongly against Daniel and accused his followers of *minūt*, heresy, whereas, according to the evidence I have just cited, these *minīm* were actually from his own yeshiva. Indeed there may have been some kind of 'purge' at Sura when all of Daniel's supporters were removed.

It appears that the Pumbeditans now embarked upon a vigorous campaign to transfer additional communities to their jurisdiction. We find an echo of that process in a document from Harkavy's Geniza collection published at about the same time by Assaf and by Mann. It contains a polemi-

further, on page xiv, he assumes that such a book, which draws from both the Babylonian Talmud and from the Palestinian one, could have been written only in Sura. On Sura's priority: Sherira, *Letter*, 91; the feeling of superiority and priority of Sura is reflected in the responsum of Naḥshōn Gaon on a query of Baṣrians: "... Babylonia and all its surroundings acted as Rav; Neharde'a and all its surroundings acted as Samuel; so we, who are remote (in time) from both Rav and Samuel, whom shall we follow?" and the answer: "on Neharde'a a limitation was imposed, but not on Babylonia, therefore one may act everywhere as Rav" (i.e., as was the custom of Sura), see *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 149 (no. 385, on alimonies for a widow). Cf. Poznanski, *Hagoren*, 6 (1906), 42f., who inter alia contradicts Halevy's opinion (*Dōrōt*, III, 76ff.), who argued that the priority of Sura as described by Sherira was valid only under the *amōrā'im*. See also Malter, *Saadia*, 104. The relative stability of Sura: Rosenthal, *Shenāton*, 11-12 (1984-86), 591. Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah: Sherira, *Letter*, 102. The floruit of Sura: Malter, *ibid.*, 41f.; more on Sura's priority: Weinberg, *Mirsky Jub. Vol.*, 169-171 (the author deals in this article in Arab sources also, without having checked them directly, so most of his transcriptions are faulty). On the matter of the responsa quantity see also Poznanski, *ibid.*, 43: until Sherira's day the number of the Sura responsa was four times more than of Pumbedita; whereas responsa preserved from Sherira and Hayy overreach in quantity those of all the geonim, of both yeshivot, put together. The early priority of Sura is proven also, in his *Letter*, by the evidence of Sherira, who was a Pumbeditan, let alone by Nathan the Babylonian, who, one feels was himself a Suran.

cal text by a Karaite against the Rabbanites. In his attempt to prove the lack of agreement within the latter, he copied and also translated into Arabic a responsum of Naḥshōn, gaon of Sura (c. 875). He wrote: "I have shown that the Rabbanites and the Karaites and the 'Ananites use the same methods, for all of them employ *istidlāl* (analogy), not *naql* (tradition)". Naḥshōn Gaon's responsum exhibits embitterment towards the people of Qayrawān for sending the same query to the two yeshivot concerning the laws of the marriage contract (*ketubbā*; *mālōg* properties), even though the distance between them is 28 parasangs and thus they cannot issue an identical responsum:

We decided not to write you anything concerning the query. You people did not act as is acceptable, since you transgressed an interdiction of our sages, who said (BT 'Av. *Zārā 7a*): if somebody asks a scholar and he forbade, he should not ask another scholar who would allow.... You wrote the same queries to us and to the yeshiva of Pumbedita, whereas there is between us a distance of almost 28 parasangs; we do not know what they wrote.... R. Nathan b. R. Ḥananiah (probably, as implied, a leader of the Babylonian community), of blessed memory, or your earlier scholars, who were God fearing people, never acted this way; since 37 years they used to send queries either only to us or only to Pumbedita.

We thus learn that about 835 (37 years before Naḥshōn Gaon, the one who wrote it) queries were already sent from the Maghrib to Pumbedita, as well. Mentioned in that responsum are the names of the Pumbedita geonim, Matathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay (860-869), and Isaac Ṣemaḥ B. Palṭoi (872-888) and also a Mr. 'Amram, to whom the Qayrawānites sent queries before they turned to Naḥshōn.

Here on in, Sura suffered decline, attributed by Sherira Gaon to the deaths of most of the Sura scholars within a short period of time: "The majority of the elders of Mātā Maḥsīya (= Sura) died during a period of three months"; there may have been an epidemic. After a period of about 25 years when the geonim were Hayy b. Naḥshōn (886-896), Hillai b. Naṭrūnai (896-904) and Shalom b. Mišael (904-907), "Mātā Maḥsīya declined much and no scholars were left there". However, Sherira further mentions Jacob b. Naṭrūnai, who was the gaon of Sura from 914. About 924, the exilarch David b. Zakkai appointed Yomṭōv Kahanā b. Jacob, "although he was a weaver, since there were almost no scholars any more and he ruled for four years". Sherira continues, relating about the intention of appointing a Pumbeditan as gaon in Sura, and the appointment of Saadia Gaon. These, therefore, are the main aspects of this chapter of the decline of Sura and the rise of Pumbedita. Whereas at the time that Sherira Gaon was writing his *Letter* there was no yeshiva at all in Sura, since the gaon of Sura, Joseph b. Jacob b. Saṭyā, was not able to rise to the level necessary for this high post, "nor did he have what to say, even at the time of R. Aaron Gaon". This is the way Sherira describes the reason why Joseph Gaon left Sura, while expressing disdain for Aaron Gaon, alias Khalaf b. Sarjāda, one of Sherira's predecessors at the Pumbedita gaonate: "R. Joseph was left alone in Maḥsīya", his position becoming completely precarious.... so he left Maḥsīya for good, as well as Babylonia, and went to the

city of Baṣra, where he passed away; to this day there is no yeshiva in Maḥsiya” (in 987, when the letter was written).

It appears that in the same period—the second half of the ninth century—Pumbedita put forth the demand for a change in the ancient custom by which two-thirds of the unearmarked monies from the communities were sent to Sura, and only a third to Pumbedita. In the original Arabic version of Nathan the Babylonian, there indeed is a clear reference to this order of two thirds as opposed to a third.

In July 977, ten years before Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, Samuel b. Hophni was still in Pumbedita, and from a letter sent to Fustat, it appears that he and his family and supporters were a kind of separate faction in the yeshiva and asked the people of Fustat for separate funding. It is known that the parties reached an agreement a few years after Sherira Gaon wrote his *Letter* and after Samuel b. Hophni and his party left Pumbedita for Sura, at the end of the tenth century. The agreement also included a nuptial pact, that of Hayy b. Sherira with Samuel b. Hophni's daughter. Samuel b. Hophni, in one of the letters mentioning the agreement, describes the distress of hunger and suffering in Sura because of the general impoverishment of the Jews of Babylonia. Yet Sura recovered and continued to be active after Samuel b. Hophni, as well, as we shall see below. There was a view that Sura then owed its revival to the efforts of Sherira and Hayy, but from the implications of Samuel b. Hophni's letters, that is not the case and a certain degree of resentment and competition continued to hold sway later as well.

It was customary to call Sura “the yeshiva at the right”, and Pumbedita as “at the left”. Thus, for example: “This deed of renunciation that has been validated was dispatched by us to the yeshiva at the right”; and the verse, “the correct justice will be remembered at the right”, in a poem dealing with Sura's rehabilitation. On the other hand, in the *Sefer ha-galuy*: “and it came to pass when Yedōd and the flies presiding over the left (have seen)” etc., (in the polemic against David b. Zakkai and Kohen Šedeq, the Pumbedita gaon), and further down: “Saadia, head of the one at the right”. So also is a letter of appeal by a certain Menahem to Saadia Gaon ending with the following rhymes: “...our homily comments on recondate matters.... which are inscribed by the head of the right in the city of Maḥsiya”; or at the head of a letter: “To our Lord Saadia Gaon of the right in the city of Maḥsiya”. Harkavy and Lewin, as well, assumed on the basis of what Nathan the Babylonian wrote that the terms meant that the gaon of Sura sat at the exilarch's right, and the gaon of Pumbedita at his left, and that this explains the meaning of the terms right and left. Mann agreed with them. Chapira, and Malter after him, believed that these were actually bynames given to the yeshivot because of their disputes, as if they were two sides, or parties, to a feud. Malter: “We receive here the interesting information that the two opposing parties were designated by ‘right’.... and ‘left’”. However, the only correct solution for the conundrum is something much simpler: ‘right’, as implied in the Arabic *yaman*, is south, Sura's location, and ‘left’ is north (the early meaning of *sha'm*, in Arabic being left). Obermeyer had already suggested that explanation and was gratuitously mocked by Mann (“a fanciful theory”).

There were real differences between the two yeshivot. In one list of books in the Geniza, there is even mention of “The Book of Differences

(*kitāb al-akhlāf*, or its name was perhaps *al-khilāf*) between Sura and al-Anbār (Pumbedita)". The Pumbedita ruling in levirate marriage was to ban it and obligate the parties to perform *ḥaliṣā*, the release from marriage. In Sura it was the opposite, they obligated levirate marriage. There were also differences between the Biblical massorah, from the days the yeshiva was in Neharde'a.

In texts from the twelfth century, we find no more mention of two Babylonian yeshivot, it appears they blended into one, in Baghdad. I believe the latest mention of Sura with Pumbedita is in the 4 July 1091 letter of Abiathar ha-Kohen b. Elijah, the Palestinian gaon, from Tyre, where he turns to the "Torah scholars", of Mātā Maḥsiya and Pumbedita as well as to "Hezekiah the Exilarch" (b. David).¹⁰⁰

8. *Babylonia the Diaspora Center*

(101) In the pre-Islamic period, the Babylonian yeshivot enjoyed a period of consolidation, prosperity and flourishing. Even then they enjoyed supremacy in the competition that appeared to take place between them and the Sanhedrin—the yeshiva in Palestine. The Palestinian yeshiva zealously preserved its seniority as expressed in its extra authority in appointments, determining the order of the calendar, and, in general, its status of leadership of the Diaspora communities. However, because of easier political circumstances, Babylonia grew in strength, while Palestine was under cruel distress both economically and in religious persecution, especially when "the kingdom became *mīnūt*" (heresy), i.e., when the Roman-Byzantine imperial rule came under Christianity's sway. At the time of the Islamic victory the Babylonian yeshivot, as we have seen, were secure, well-established institutions. True, the Babylonian Talmud was completed 150 years earlier, but vigorous study and discussion of the *halākhā* were carried on in the yeshivot throughout those generations, despite transient periods of

¹⁰⁰ See 4b; the Karaite: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/33), 35ff.; Mann, *Texts*, I, 558ff.; Abramson, *ʿInyānōt*, 38ff. The distance of some 150 kms., cf. Obermeyer, 250; Assaf, *Kiryat sefer*, 7 (1929/31), 62. See Hinz, *Masse*, 62. The furlong, parasang (*fārsakh*) was of ca. six kms.; Yāfiʿī, *Mir ʾāh*, II, 323: three Arab miles; in Canard, *Transl. of al-Šūlī*, 87 n. 3: ca. 5.75 kms.; see also Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 3 (1931/32), 350; the decline of Sura: Sherira, *Letter*, 116-118; cf. Malter, *Saadia*, 105. Nathan the Babylonian on the apportionment of the monies: 12, II, a, ll. 19-20; and in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 78. The agreement between the two yeshivot: 52, b, as from l. 11; 53, a, ll. 4ff.; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 1 (1920/21), 409; Samuel b. Hopfni's letter: 47. See Poznanski, *ZjhB*, 15 (1911), 169f., his discussion with Lewin on the participation of Sherira and Hayy in the rehabilitation of Sura. The poem about Sura: TS 8 J 1, l. 10, see Schechter, *Saadyana*, 66. The deed: Harkavy, *Resp.*, no. 551. *Sefer ha-galui* in Chapira, *REJ*, 68 (1914), 11; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 72f.; Menahem: Harkavy, *Hagoren*, 1 (1897/98), 19; "to our Master Saadia": Neubauer, *Catal.*, no. 2699 (II, 91); cf. Aptowitzer, *JQR*, NS 4 (1912/13), 36, who reconstructed unnecessarily: "gaon of [the gate] of the right". See also: Bacher, *REJ*, 35 (1897), 291; Harkavy, *Zikhrōn*, 29 n. 73; Lewin, *Rav Sherira*, 2; *idem*, *Meivōt*, 49f., 53 (basing on *Seder ha-dōrōt*, that Bustanai appointed "his scholars as heads of the yeshivot, one of the right and the other of the left"); *shā'm* in Arabic, see Kazimirski s.v.; and see Obermeyer, 252. See *sefer ha-hillūqim*: Mann, *REJ*, 72 (1921), 170; TS 10 K 20.9, fol. 1b, l. 11. The matter of the levirate marriage: Aptowitzer, *Tarbiz*, 1 (4th part, 1929/30), 501. The massorah: Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/18), 352f. The letter of Abiathar: Gil, *Hist.*, 762, and see the letter itself: *idem*, *Palest.*, III, 370-375.

troubles and religious persecutions. Victorious Islam unified most of the Diaspora communities in a uniform political setting that, according to the contemporary concepts of those times, extended from one end of the world to the other: from Spain and the Atlantic coast to the border with China. Before long the Babylonian yeshivot were at the center of leadership of these diasporas and it would be incorrect to state that it was only a spiritual center. It was a center with clear national public markings, and Jewish communities all over turned to Babylonia for guidance, not only in halachic matters, theory and study, but also in issues of public leadership, recognition of their central figures—even for alleviation of distress and the vagaries of the rulers. In this way a system of continuous ties, expressed in an infinite number of a variety of writings, halachic tracts, queries and responsa, and letters developed.

Naturally, because of their close geographical proximity, the Jews of Babylonia seldom resorted to the written word in their connections with the yeshivot. Many of the contacts with the yeshivot were undoubtedly carried out in a direct manner by residents of Babylonia, Persia and environs arriving at the yeshivot, whether for urgent special needs or for those assemblies we know of so well that were held twice a year, in Adar and Elul (early spring and late summer), the *yarḥē kallā*, that I have described above. This is the reason why our knowledge of that system of connections with the diasporas comes mainly from the halachic responsa and letters sent to those afar, not those in close proximity. It is not just a matter of the letters being there because they survived in the Cairo Geniza, for a number of geonic responsa and tract collections were undoubtedly preserved in far places—in the Maghrib, Europe, Egypt—either as originals or as copies and recopies. Even the Babylonians were sometimes surprised when learning about writings in faraway places while they were not preserved in Babylonia itself. Thus, for example, we read in a responsum of a gaon that the *halākhōt* of R. Yehudai b. Naḥman (c. 760) became known in Babylonia only about 100 years after his death, when brought by Jewish captives from Christian countries (below, sec. 132). Furthermore, we find Hayy Gaon writing that he had no knowledge of responsa sent by his predecessors to faraway lands: when asked about the law of inheritance when the testator did not leave anything for the heirs and if in such a case the will was void, and reminded of the rulings of former geonim, he wrote, among other matters that: "...maybe that some of the earliest scholars or perhaps later *alūfīm* said such things, of which we have no knowledge". And again in a responsum attributed to Sherira and Hayy, dealing with matters ascribed to R. Joshua b. Levi, about issues of the creation, when the asker writes among other things that: "this is what we found in commentaries of some geonim, of holy blessed memory", etc., he gets the answer: "this interpretation found by you is unknown to us and we cannot accept it", etc.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ See Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, *Ōr zārū'a*, II, 771 (no. 432): "know ye that those *halākhōt* of our Lord and Master Yehūdai have not been seen by us in Babylonia in the days of our Master Yehūdai, but some 100 years after him, brought by prisoners to Babylonia....". See the matter of the will: Harkavy, *Resp.* 133 (no. 260); the unknown commentary, *ibid.*, 199 (no. 383). Cf. on the whole matter, Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 461; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 63ff. The immense extent of the relations of the yeshivot is well expressed by Hayy Gaon, in his responsum on queries asking him about the occult sciences: "emissaries are sent from all

(102) When clarifying the subject of the ties between the Babylonian yeshivot and the Diaspora communities, the letters of the geonim have special importance. While letters known as 'responsa' dealt with halachic issues and concrete historical information can be gleaned from them only by way of implication, the geonic letters sent to community personages dealt with practical, public and other matters, and have greater historical importance. In my collection I have included these letters as far as they have been preserved. These are letters of the Jewish authorities and can be considered a separate category, distinct from the responsa category. These letters stem from the tenth century on, but sometimes we find in more ancient responsa segments similar in nature to that found in the letters, such as the superscription found in *Seder 'amram gaon* (c. 860): "Amram b. Sheshnā *rēsh methivtā* (the yeshiva head) of Mātā Maḥsīya (=Sura) to our Lord Isaac son of our Lord Simeon", etc. (above, 98).

It was customary to read the letters of the yeshiva before the synagogue congregation, a custom that assumed virtually obligatory validity. Even letters sent to the Palestinian yeshiva would be read to the congregation, as Sherira and Hayy explicitly note in one of their letters to Samuel ha-Kohen B. Joseph, the Palestinian gaon: "The head of the yeshiva, may he live forever, is beseeched to order the reading of the letter in public, because so it was done for our ancestors many times". It seems that such letters were meant for the public and that it was obligatory to read it to them. The geonim and their contemporaries called these letters *peshiṭim*.¹⁰²

(103) Because of the paucity of information about the affairs of the yeshivot in the earlier period, it was assumed that at the beginning only Sura maintained fast ties with the Diaspora communities. Alexander Marx disagreed, basing his view especially on the 953 letter of the Pumbedita yeshiva to prove that as early as the mid-tenth century there were also ties between the local communities and Pumbedita. In fact, it is highly probable that throughout the entire period under discussion the two yeshivot had a ramified system of relations with the diasporas, and were even in competition with each other, and with the Palestinian yeshiva, as well. I have elabo-

countries, from South and East and North and from the Land of Kūsh, and Ashkenaz, and France, and (Christian) Spain.... since we have already written to the inhabitants of Calabria and Apulia on these matters", etc. See *Sha'arē tesh.*, 10b (no. 99); Krauss, *Hazofeh*, 7 (1923), 233.

¹⁰² *Seder 'amram gaon*, 24b-25a; see also the statement of Naṭrūnai Gaon (ca. 850), in the additions to the *Arūkh*, entry *abās*, which I mentioned above, sec. 98. See the fragment of a letter of Sherira Gaon, 27, a, to l. 12; cf. Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1st part, 1929/30), 115 n. 4; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 475 n. 20, has shown that this fragment was not related at all with Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr, and that "of R. Joseph" which is said there in continuation, is an opening to the copy of Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr's letter; therefore, the letter of Sherira and Hayy was not sent to R. Joseph; Assaf, *ibid.*, in a note, mentions the statement of Mann, while disregarding his correct conclusion. See also Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 85f., who did not have, at that time, enough sources by which to identify the real nature of the letter, and assumed that it was addressed to Joseph ha-Kohen, who, he thought, was the heir of Josiah Gaon in the Palestinian yeshiva. *Peshiṭim*, see 20, ll. 14, 15; and see this term also in *Ōsar ha-g.*, to *Gifṭin*, 12 (no. 23), in a responsum of Hayy Gaon: ".... The geonim, of blessed memory, starting with our Lords the *sāvōrā'im*, used to write to all localities *peshiṭim*"; see also the letter of the one who was to become gaon of Palestine, Daniel b. 'Azariah (who was a Babylonian, from the exilarch's house), in Gil, *Palest.*, II, 629 (no. 344, a, ll. 15ff.): a *peshiṭ* that was written to the Fustat community; cf. Goitein, *Shalem*, 2 (1975/76), 47, and n. 18.

rated on the latter competition elsewhere, and I shall do so below concerning the communities of 'the Palestinians' and 'the Babylonians'. Here I will only note that this competition had an ideological base expressed, first of all, in adherence to customs unique to Babylonia as opposed to those of Palestine. However, it should be remembered that alongside this competition there were also ties and cooperation, such as between the faction of Mevasser Gaon of Pumbedita and the Palestinian Meir Gaon and his son Aaron at the beginning of the tenth century, and those between Sherira and Hayy and the Palestinian geonim of the first priestly family, among them and especially Samuel ha-Kohen b. Joseph. Jacob b. Nissim sent his letter to the people of Qābis in the matter of queries asked of Sherira and Hayy, that were sent by a Palestinian, a certain Menahem, "a man of the Holy Land", who was a member of its yeshiva. A somewhat mysterious issue is that of the knowledge of the Palestinian Talmud and the extent of its acceptance. Statements such as that of Pirqoy b. Bāboy: "Some found books of the *mishnā* and some hidden Talmud (books) were found"; or Sherira Gaon's statement in a responsum that was preserved in the book *hamaḥriḥ*^a, about the Jerusalem Talmud "that was found some years ago", that apparently bears evidence about a disregard for the Palestinian Talmud for a number of generations. However, to my mind it was not willful disregard, just as there was no disregard in the talmudic period, for the Talmud "of the westerners", the Palestinian one, is not infrequently mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud. In all events, the few citations above and other of a similar nature are not proof of the opposite. It is known that Palestine had a great influence in Babylonia, especially in Sura. In one place even Sherira Gaon mentions a Palestinian tradition that was well known in Babylonia: "This text (cited by) R. ʿAmram (b. Sheshnā, Sura c. 860), although not explicitly found in the (Babylonian) *gemārā*, is found explicitly in the Palestinian Talmud". As to Hayy Gaon, his dismissal of some opinions of the Palestinian Talmud is proof of an acquaintance over many generations with the Yerushalmi: "In a matter which was decided in our Talmud we shall not rely on the Talmud of the Palestinians, since for many years learning was interrupted there, because of forced baptism".

Competition with Palestine was also expressed in the financial sphere. Frequent letters requesting financial aid were flowing into the communities from each of the three yeshivot. It seems that the prevalent view in the communities was that a third of all contributions be sent to each of the three yeshivot, so that Babylonia would receive two-thirds and Palestine a third. The one testimony about this is the report of the assembly convoked by the Qayrawān Nagid Abraham b. ʿAṭā'. After receiving an emotional letter from Hayy Gaon, 200 dinars were collected there with instructions to divide them in the aforementioned manner.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ See the letter from Pumbedita: 13; on its writer it only says that he was a grandson of Tōv, who was the chief judge of the yeshiva (his name was probably Naḥshōn; *infra*, sec. 239). See Marx, *JQR*, 18 (1905/06), 770, who argues with Müller, *Maṭeah*, 142f. n. 13), and with Büchler, *REJ*, 50 (1905), 160. See also the assumption of Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 54, that the Pumbedita yeshiva started to have relations with the Diaspora (by halachic responsa) not before Palṭoi Gaon (841-858); see about Palṭoi Gaon's connections with the Maghrib: Rosenthal, *Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 (1983-1986), 598ff. On the Palestinian customs and on the relations between 'Babylonians' and 'Palestinians', see Gil, *Hist.*, 501-505. Here it is

(104) The actual sources attesting to these ties with the Diaspora are, of course, incomplete and their preservation was largely a matter of chance. Nevertheless, over all, these sources are relatively copious. Especially ample are the sources and evidence pertaining to the Maghrib, both due to the importance of this center among all the diasporas in the period under discussion, and also because many of the letters related to the Maghrib made their way through Fustat where copies were made, and many of these wound up in the Geniza. Many documents from the Maghrib also reached the Geniza via immigrants to Egypt.

Babylonia and Persia are not represented in these documents except for the later period, that of Samuel b. Eli and later, which I will deal with separately in the discussion about the Jews of Babylonia in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries and the localities of the Jews in Babylonia and Persia.

Damascus, even though its ties were mainly with the Palestinian yeshiva, most probably had a Babylonian Jewish community which not only sought guidance from the Babylonian yeshivot, but also sent them contributions. Thus for instance in the geonic responsum (cited above, sec. 98), which Assaf assumed was that of the Pumbedita gaon (Isaac) Şemah b. Paltoi (872-888), where we read that the donations for the yeshiva should be sent via the Damascenes David and Mevasser. It seems that it was written to one of the communities of Syria and it contains evidence that Damascus was a liaison and transit center for the Babylonian yeshivot; for the communities of Syria Damascus perhaps played a role similar to that of Fustat, through which the ties with the Maghrib were relayed. Damascus' intermediate location between the yeshivot of Babylonia and Palestine was later expressed, by way of figure of speech, in the second half of the twelfth century letter of Samuel b. Eli addressed to "the holy community residing in the city of Damascus-Ḥadrak", that "turn to the yeshiva of the Holy Land but are conducted according to the yeshiva of the Exile".¹⁰⁴

(105) As stated above, Fustat was an important juncture of the ties of the Babylonian yeshivot and the communities of the Mediterranean basin. Fustat itself had a large community of Babylonian Jews, a number of important personages flourished there over the years, and the community had close ties with the Babylonian yeshivot. It seems that the Babylonian community in Fustat, perhaps also in other Egyptian cities as well, grew with the waves of immigration from Babylonia, especially around the mid-tenth

worthy to cite from Harkavy's *Resp.*, 29 (no. 64): "this query we received some time ago from the *ḥavērim*, the scholars from Jerusalem". The time was: "the end of the month of Tevet, of the year (Sel.) 1327" (13 January 1016; *ibid.*, 32). Here again is proof on relations between Palestine and Babylonia (Pumbedita) during that period. Menahem, the carrier of Jacob b. Nissim's letter: 36, l. 25. See the matter of the Palestinian Talmud: Isaiah of Trani, *Sefer ha-makhrī'a* (Lublin ed.), 151b-152a (no. 42), a responsum of Sherira Gaon to the Maghrib, about the formula, in the *ketubbā*, "(monies) which are due to you according to the Torah". Pirqoy b. Bābōy, in Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/31), 403, cf. Spiegel, *Wolfson Jub. Vol.*, 253-258; Friedman, *Sinai*, 83 (1977/78), 250-251; *idem*, *Marriage*, I, 244-257; Ben-Sasson, *Shalem*, 5 (1986/87), 34-36, 40. Sherira Gaon on the Palestinian Talmud: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 228 (no. 434); the statement of Hayy Gaon: Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 125f. (see the parallel versions mentioned by him in the preamble to the responsum); cf. Lewin, *Sefer metivōt*, pp. i, vi; the gathering at the nagid's: 148. I have surveyed in detail the relations of the Babylonian yeshivot with Palestine elsewhere: Gil, *Hist.*, 527-539.

¹⁰⁴ Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 76 (Bodl. Cat. 2835), fol. 78, l. 14ff. Samuel b. Eli: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2nd part, 1929/30), 80ff.

century, that I will be discussing below. Characteristic of this issue are the letters of Saadia b. Joseph of Fayyūm, i.e., Saadia Gaon, himself an Egyptian Jew. After having sojourned in Palestine he made his way towards Babylonia. It appears that his father Joseph was a member of the Babylonian community in Egypt—he was, after all, known as Saadia b. Joseph *alūf*—and it seems, therefore, that his father had been designated with that honorary Babylonian title as was his son after him. During the calendar controversy, Saadia wrote to his circle of disciples in Fustat making them privy to his struggle and doubts. In one of the letters to the sons of Eli b. Ṭabnai—Solomon, Abraham and Ezra—of 3 January 923, we even find testimony that they were accustomed to write also to Mevasser, gaon of Pumbedita, and to Abū'l-Faḍl, who may have been the then exilarch, David b. Zakkai. Mevasser Gaon even sent a letter of rebuke and admonition, in two copies, to the Babylonian community in Fustat, and the exilarch also wrote them “a book of remembrance and an ever-lasting scroll”, that, too, in two copies.¹⁰⁵

(106) There was direct involvement by the Babylonian gaon in the life of the Fustat community, he even used to inform them of the problems of the yeshiva. For instance, we read in a fragment of a letter of Nehemiah ha-Kohen b. Kohen Sedeq, gaon of Pumbedita, written circa 963 to the Fustat community, about a severe controversy in the community relating to the cantor. The gaon mentions *peshiṭim* sent to the community the previous year. It seems that those letters, meant for the general public, contained information about the severe controversy that had erupted at the Pumbedita yeshiva between the gaon and Sherira's party, and there is an appeal to the community to renew the ties with Pumbedita. Here, too, as in the above letter of Saadia, Solomon b. Eli b. Ṭabnai is mentioned, to whom the gaon refers to as “our attorney”, i.e., empowered to deal with monies meant for the yeshiva and the shipment of queries and money. There is also mention of a certain Ben Aaron of Baghdad, i.e., the son of a Baghdadian who had emigrated to Fustat who, naturally, joined its Babylonian community. Mann offered the suggestion that ‘the head’ mentioned was Elḥanan, father of Shemariah, because of the formula used when describing his grandson: “Elḥanan *rōsh ha-seder* of all of Israel b. Shemariah, chief judge of all Israel b. Elḥanan the chief *rav*”. He may have been correct.

It appears that the main ties of the Fustat Babylonians were with the Pumbedita yeshiva. True, the period from which remnants and evidence survived is that of Sura's decline, except for the short period of Saadia's gaonate. In the generations following the calendar controversy it appears that even the ties with Pumbedita weakened. Sherira Gaon complains about the Fustat men who do not properly maintain the ties, admonishing them and explaining the importance of the ties as if they had never heard something like that before. The yeshiva, he rebukes them, is a substitute for the sacrifices in the Temple of yore, and supporting it atones for sins. It is necessary to study and understand the *halākhōt* as taught by a “genuine master”. Then comes the dramatic question: “How have you forgotten the *bēt*

¹⁰⁵ See a detailed discussion of Geniza data regarding ‘Babylonian’ communities that sprang and flourished following emigrations from Iraq, in Ashtor, *AESC*, 27 (1972), 188ff. See 7, and also the other letters of Saadia: 5, 6. See also the letters he wrote after becoming gaon of Sura: 8, and the letter printed by Revel, *Devir*, 1 (1922/23), 180ff.

ha-wa'd (=the yeshiva) and abandoned it?" The praises of Babylonia that he then lists give us a basis for assuming that the neglect he complains about was for the benefit of the Palestinian yeshiva.

If the Fustat Babylonians were indeed drawn towards the Palestinian yeshiva, the internal conflicts of this yeshiva weakened the attraction. In all events we find a return to, and a strengthening of the Pumbedita ties in the time of Hayy Gaon. "The communities(!) that pray in the Babylonian synagogue (in Fustat) named for your yeshiva", they write to him at about 1035. They also mention therein the previous letter they had sent him with one 'Aṭṭāf ha-Levi b. Tōv. They apologize for the delay in the shipment of *akhmās*, these are the 'fifths', the sobriquet for the tithes sent to the yeshiva, for much money was spent on completing the synagogue building (it can be assumed that it had been destroyed in the wake of the decrees of al-Ḥākim), and redeeming of captives (Byzantine Jews?). They also complain about someone stealing the letters sent from the yeshiva (perhaps their competitors, the community of 'the Palestinians') and ask the gaon to issue a letter cursing that anonymous person and even they themselves will curse him in their synagogue, as it would certainly put an end to those activities. All in all, the letter attests to a renewal of ties and money shipments to the yeshiva.

Among other matters, Hayy Gaon's letter to Nehemiah *rōsh ha-pereq* b. Abraham (who is Nehemiah, Sahlān's brother), written in April 1037, enlightens us about the nature of the ties between the yeshiva and the local community. Nehemiah vowed to desist from dealing with ritual slaughter and leading the congregation in prayer, apparently because of a dispute with the congregation, and the gaon, according to the instructions in the Babylonian Talmud, *Nedārīm*, 21b, releases him from his vow. Similar intervention appears as well in another of his letters of about eight months later, to Nehemiah's brother, Sahlān b. Abraham, where the gaon intervenes in a dispute that erupted in the Babylonian congregation involving seventeen of its people who revolted against Sahlān's leadership. The gaon informs Sahlān that he supports him and that he even intends to write about it to the highly influential Ḥesed al-Tustarī. This is especially interesting because we see that the Pumbedita gaon even maintains ties with Karaite personalities, as the aforementioned Ḥesed b. Yashar was one of the heads of the Karaite sect of the Tustaris.

The Sura gaon, Samuel b. Hophni, Hayy's contemporary, writes to an important Fustat personage in July 1008. The letter is written in a spirit of submission and supplication. He even places himself in the position of expecting guidance and good advice from the addressee; clearly, he had a great desire to renew Sura's ties with the Fustat community and its important wealthy personages, ties that had been cut off certainly for a few generations.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ The letter of Nehemiah Gaon: 18, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/18), 343; the titles of Elhanan: TS 16.134, and also: TS 12.193. The sons of Aaron the Baghdadian are mentioned by Nehemiah Gaon in other two letters of his: 15, 17. Sherira's letter: 24, especially ll. 3ff., 12ff., 38ff. (the praise of Babylonia is based on BT *Megillā*, 29a). Another fragment of a letter by Sherira Gaon, 25, written around 970, also contains accusations about the lack of communication with the yeshiva. The young generation does not reach the "school of the teacher", out of economic causes; "even many sons of talmudic scholars stray away to other

(107) Very important support was provided to the Babylonian yeshivot by two pairs of personages, fathers and sons: SHEMARIAH B. ELHANAN and his son ELHANAN; and ABRAHAM B. SAHLĀN and his son SAHLĀN. Shemariah, the earlier of these personages was one of the captives in Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's famous story of the four captives to be discussed below. Elsewhere I have dealt with Shemariah's activities in the area of the ties with the Palestinian yeshiva. His connection with this yeshiva, strengthened over the years, as we shall see, was even a source of concern at the Pumbedita yeshiva. First, I will survey the ties of Shemariah and his son Elhanan with Babylonia.

Above, we have seen that Elhanan, Shemariah's father, was called "the chief *rav*". In other words, he had a major status in the Babylonian congregation of Fustat. After the death of Nehemiah Gaon, succeeded by Sherira (968), Elhanan, as Hayy Gaon writes, had ties with him: "And in the years of the gaon our father (i.e., Sherira), Mr. Elhanan b. Mr. Shemariah asked him in the letter of Mr. Jacob b. Mr. Paṭrōn and students who were in Qayrawān.... about the custom prevalent in Qayrawān to appoint women as trustees..."¹⁰⁷

occupations and stick to their salaries, or emigrate". Here also, like in 24, he uses the expression "to confine oneself for the study of religion", about which I wrote *supra*, sec. 94. The letter to Hayy: 43; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 478; *ibid.*, n. 21, see Mann's opinion that it was a special honorific title granted to the synagogue of the 'Babylonians' in Fustat by the gaon, to be named after his yeshiva; however, it is but a matter of etiquette. See also Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 452. The letter to Nehemiah: 40; there is in this letter also a confirmation of the receipt of the 'remittance', i.e., of the money for the yeshiva. Mentioned there are the two sons of Nehemiah, Abraham and Josiah. The addressee's father, Abraham b. Sahlān, is called there *alif* and *hāver* of "our yeshiva". The letter to Sahlān: 41. The Palestinian yeshiva probably intended to prevent the 'Palestinians' in Fustat from applying to the Babylonian yeshivot; we have a letter in which Ephraim b. Shemariah, who writes to the Jerusalemite gaon, Solomon b. Judah, defends himself against a claim that he initiated contacts with Hayy Gaon; see MS Reinach, in: Schwab *REJ*, 70 (1920), 59ff., and cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 528ff. Samuel b. Hophni's letter: 55; this letter as well might have been written to someone of the Tustaris, as it contains greetings for Abū Sulaymān David b. Bābshād, known to us as one of the Karaite notables in Fustat. A remainder of a short letter, apparently having confirmed the receipt of a letter, or perhaps of a quire of queries sent by somebody from Fustat, is 202, which may be deduced from "I read them" in l. 4, and "our Master" in l. 5, probably meaning the yeshiva head.

¹⁰⁷ These two personalities have been described by: Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/18), 352-356; *idem*, *Jews*, I, 26-41. II, 21-41; Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 32 (1962/63), 266ff.; *idem*, *Finkel Jub. Vol.*, 117ff.; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 105-179. See the discussion about Shemariah and his son Elhanan; Gil, *Hist.*, 575-582 and the references there. A detailed discussion on these personalities is found in Bareket, *Shafṛ*, 144-188 which deals with the leadership of the Jews in Fustat during the first half of the eleventh century; see 37, about the worries of Hayy Gaon about Shemariah b. Elhanan, who did not confirm to the yeshiva the receipt of one of the two quires of responsa sent to him since "he joined the Palestinian yeshiva". This was written on 11 August 1006. By combining an additional Geniza fragment with a letter edited by me in: *Palest.*, II, 65f., Ben-Sasson managed, in *Zion*, 51 (1986), 386ff., to develop a plausible assumption about strong ties between Shemariah b. Elhanan and the Palestinian gaon Josiah b. Aaron, as Josiah was trying to undermine the position of the gaon Samuel ha-Kohen b. Joseph. In order to attract him, Josiah offered to Shemariah the position of chief judge in the Palestinian yeshiva. In light of this, it appears that the title granted by the Palestinian yeshiva to Shemariah: chief judge of "all of Israel" (Ben-Sasson, *ibid.*, 402) had indeed a real meaning, not as I first assumed. So also what was said about the son, Elhanan, that he required that the Palestinian gaon, Josiah b. Aaron, "do not innovate anything unless he grants him the position of chief judge", contains a core of reality. See what I wrote on these matters: Gil, *Hist.*, 578-580; *idem*, *Te'uda*, 7 (1991), 299, and see the full version of

(108) The Sura yeshiva also tried to renew ties with Fustat towards the end of the tenth century through Elḥanan b. Shemariah, then a young man. The letter of the Sura gaon, Šemah Šedeq b. Isaac to Elḥanan b. Shemariah attests to it. Šemah Šedeq refers to himself as the head of the Sura yeshivot (!), something that can not be explained and appears to be a scribe's error. The letter heaps praise on Shemariah, who is addressed as: "leader of the Jews", and at the end of the letter: "the marvelous exalted elder", "elder of the generation". Sahl, *alūf* son of *alūf*, our "trustee in Mosul", announced that Elḥanan was on his way to Baghdad. The gaon expresses fatherly feelings towards Elḥanan as if he was his own son: He notes that his son, Paltoy, has passed away at an early age (so it is implied), after having been chief of the yeshiva's court. Solomon, Elḥanan's 'servant', arrived in Baghdad by himself, and according to him Elḥanan was apprehensive of arriving because of fear of the authorities. The gaon attempts to abate his fears, assuring that he will care for him: "We will accompany him to the governors". They yearned for Elḥanan's arrival because "in Babylonia there was no exemplary man.... since they are all *sārāvīm* and *bēt merī* and *salōnīm*" (Ez. ii:6; KJV has: "briers and thorns and a rebellious house", etc.) The yeshiva was even ready to allay the expenses of his journey, any price, even as much as 1,000 *kesef* (silver money, i.e., dirhams). The father, Shemariah, administered study activities in Fustat in the *bēt midrāsh* of which he was head. Sherira warmly recommended this school of the "elder.... great and exalted and noble, our Lord Shemariah the head.... son of our Lord Elḥanan of blessed memory".

Clearly, Shemariah enjoyed the status of leader of the Fustat Babylonian congregation; characteristic of this status is the fact that the Qayrawān congregation turned to him when seeking clarification in matters of inheritance. Also notable about this activity is the particularly close connection between the Maghribis of Qayrawān and the Babylonian congregation in Fustat.

Shemariah b. Elḥanan's eminent status in the diaporas is confirmed by the letter of Ḥushiel b. Elḥanan, who was also writing in the name of his son Elḥanan, from Qayrawān, to Shemariah and his son Elḥanan. According to him, he had left his homeland for the "land of Ishmael" only for the "purpose of seeing the Master for whom I had yearned for years", but after a lengthy sojourn in Qayrawān did not succeed in realizing his wish.¹⁰⁸

(109) Sherira and Hayy maintained a correspondence with Shemariah b. Elḥanan. A quire of responsa copied by Joseph b. Jacob the Babylonian has

the document, no. 38, *ibid.*, 311-314. See Hayy Gaon in Harkavy, *Resp.*, 2 (no. 1) = *Ōzar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 282 (referring to *Ket. 87b*); on the halachic aspects, see *ibid.*, 280f.

¹⁰⁸ The letter of Šemah Šedeq: 45. The time of the letter: ca. 990; perhaps some years later, when Sura was reopened; cf. Chapira, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1925), 7, who has a hardly credible assumption linking Elḥanan with a dispute in Mosul, perhaps with the scholar Ibn Qūsīn who lived there (a converted Jew, a famous physician in his day, who wrote a treatise against Jews; his exact time is unknown); this basing on Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, 333. Sherira's letter: 24, ll. 84ff.; the request from Qayrawān: 112, b, ll. 10, 11. Shemariah's status is attested also by a writ of court written under "Shemariah, chief judge of all Israel, son of our Master Elḥanan the leading scholar", in a claim of Abraham b. Sa'āda against his brother, over a transport of pearls: 229; the claimant even wrote on this matter directly to Shemariah b. Elḥanan: 230, l. 15, something a claimant would not dare doing in our times. The letter of Ḥushiel: TS 28.1, ed. Schechter, *JQR* 11 (1898/99), 647ff.

been preserved. The original quire was sent to Shemariah in the month of Shevat 1302 Sel. (which began on 19 January 991). There was in it a query regarding the text in the Babylonian Talmud, *Ber. 3b* and also *Sanh. 16b*, where the Bible verse was cited (I Chronicles 27:34), "and after Ahitophel was Benaiah the son of Jehoiada", whereas in the text we have, it is "Jehoiada the son of Benaiah". Such was the text in the Babylonian Talmud in Shemariah's possession (as in the printed text we have), while in that of the Qayrawānites the text was corrected according to the Bible. This is apparently proof that Elhanan sent queries to the Sura gaon, Samuel b. Hophni, and at the head of the quire of queries asked of Samuel, we find: "What Elhanan b. Shemariah the Head asked".

However, it seems that Shemariah's main ties were with Pumbedita. Thus, for instance, is a page we have from the Geniza pertaining to the Mishnā *Pes. i:7* (in the Babylonian Talmud: *ibid. 15a, 20b*), and the preamble: "These are the queries asked of us by our Lord and Master Shemariah, 'Ha-rav', b. our Lord Elhanan sent to us to the Gate of the yeshiva of the Diaspora to the great Court of our Lord Sherira Head of the yeshiva of *ge'ōn ya'qōv* and we ordered that they be read to us and also ordered the responsum on them to be written as was shown to us by Heaven".¹⁰⁹

(110) It should be noted that Shemariah took the trouble to copy in his own hand letters of the geonim and, of course, also responsa in matters of *halākhā*. There is no doubt that both Sherira and his son Hayy made every

¹⁰⁹ See *Diqdūqē sōferīm to Berākhōt*, p. 8, n. 10. The manuscript, Bodl e 98, fs. 22-23, was published by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 1 (1921/22), 15f.; and reedited in *Oṣar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, 5f.; this is what is said therein: "... (our Master) Sherira Gaon and our Master Hayy, his son, chief judge of the yeshiva, of blessed memory, from the quire of the chapter of *Berākhōt*.... As it was, in response to our Master Shemariah son of our Master Elhanan, of blessed memory, in the month of Av (Sel.) 1302. This is what is said in the first query: the treatise *Berākhōt* arrived from Qayrawān, and this *halākhā* is written therein: 'after Ahitophel was Jehoiada son of Benaiah'", etc. The copyist, Joseph b. Jacob the Babylonian, naturally cited a version of R. Nissim, who copied the text of Sherira and Hayy; in a Paris Geniza manuscript, belonging to Alliance isr., there is a fragment from the *Sefer ha-mafteah* of R. Nissim, to the treatise *Sanhedrīn*, where, regarding the version of *Berākhōt* and *Sanhedrīn*, a passage from Sherira and Hayy is cited, including this phrase: "this tradition is garbled in all versions, and we corrected it according to the versions of the yeshivot", etc. The fragment was first printed by Lévi, *REJ*, 44 (1902), 295ff., and again by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 1 (1921/22), 17f., and in *Oṣar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, 3f. See the list of Sherira's responsa to Shemariah b. Elhanan, in Assaf, *Mi-sifrut ha-g.*, 227; see also *idem*, in *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/34), 110: "this query has already been addressed to us by our Master R. Shemariah, may the Merciful guard him". TS 18 J 4, f. 5 is a letter from Elhanan to the Damascus community, in which he writes, among other matters, that his daughter, a widow, remained in Qayrawān, pregnant, after her husband "perished at sea and all his properties were lost"; see Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/18), 356 n. 56; *idem*, *Jews*, II, 39f. (where the letter is printed in extenso), and see the discussion *ibid.*, 38f. The queries to Samuel b. Hophni: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 147, no. 314. Cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 479f. See also Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 59: "queries of our Lord and Master Elhanan b. Shemariah, may the memory of a righteous be blessed, to our Lord Samuel ha-Kohen, of blessed memory": TS Loan 91. True, there still is a doubtful possibility that Samuel ha-Kohen b. Joseph, who was gaon of Palestine around AD 990, is meant. See also Assaf, *Resp.* (1942), 114f., where TS Loan 17 is printed, a query to Shemariah and his son Elhanan; see 229 which is a writ of court, by Shemariah and Elhanan. The leaf from the Geniza: TS NS 226.25. Schechter, *Saadyana*, 121, wrote about Geniza documents in which there is proof that there were ties between the father, Shemariah, and Samuel b. Hophni, gaon of Sura. To this day there is no trace of such documents; however, such ties may have existed, as there were those with the son, Elhanan. See on this matter also: Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 159.

possible effort to maintain Shemariah's connection with Babylonia, especially with Pumbedita. In an extensive letter Sherira Gaon wrote about 1005, he mentions Shemariah and his son Elhanan a number of times. It appears that the letter was meant for Abraham b. Sahlān and was a response to his letter (the gaon calls him *alūf* at the end of the letter without mentioning his name). Sherira notes in his letter that Abraham wrote to him praise for "the excellent *rav* our mighty steadfast Lord Shemariah, head of the row of Nehardeans b. Elhanan.... and he is the one who promoted this rule". And further down: "Who among us is like him from the Orient to the Occident, the great of the yeshiva.... whose strength in Torah is more than that of others; if that were not so we would not have appointed him as our deputy and not placed him as head of the greatest among the three rows of the yeshiva". Further down it becomes clear to us in the letter that Elhanan b. Shemariah, who, as we have seen above, was on his way to study Torah in Baghdad, did indeed arrive there and made his way towards the Pumbeditans, not the Surans. According to the gaon he was ordained in the Pumbedita yeshiva, and his steadily improving letters won praise. There might be a touch of irony in the gaon's statement "and we are certain that until he reached the age of eighty, he will reach immense achievements". In all events "he is our student and graduate". Some kind of conflict is reflected between the lines, at any rate some competition between Abraham b. Sahlān and Elhanan. The gaon takes a neutral attitude and insists that he himself has no argument with Elhanan, but it seems that someone in Fustat had complained about him. Elhanan, among other things, had written to the yeshiva, the gaon says, about the good ties of Abraham b. Sahlān with the "son of the deceased ruler", apparently the young new caliph, al-Ḥākim.

Characteristic of the relationship of the Fustat Babylonians with the Pumbedita yeshiva in the days of Shemariah and his son Elhanan, is the letter of Elhanan to Sherira and Hayy, written in February 1001. It appears that Elhanan had then returned to the Maghrib. He complains that he still did not receive responsa on the queries he had sent to the yeshiva. He had presented queries pertaining to the tractates *nedārīm* and *avōdā zārā*. He asks that two or three parts of the "commentary on Talmud tractates without queries" that he had lost be completed for him. He also mentions that the responsa on the queries, of "our Lord and Master, may God guard him", had not yet arrived. Another wish of his is to receive explanations of a number of talmudic words and expressions; he also asks that a letter of appreciation be written to his good friend, a man from Nō Amon (i.e., Alexandria), Khalfa b. Ḥakhmōn. (In the merchants' letters of my collection, Jacob b. Nahum b. Ḥakhmōn is mentioned, perhaps the aforementioned's nephew.) Many requests are concentrated in this letter, the language of which is forceful, as if from a man to whom something is owed. It should also be mentioned that in an anonymous letter dealing with issues of ritual slaughter, explanations by Hayy Gaon to Elhanan b. Shemariah, based on what Hayy had received from previous geonim, are mentioned a number of times.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Shemariah is probably the 'scribe' mentioned by Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 68, and see *ibid.*, 103f., the addition. This becomes credible due to TS 20.35, where in the *recto* there is a document written by Shemariah in an elegant scribal hand, bearing his signature, whereas in the *verso* there is a document written by the same hand, which is similar to the writing in

(111) In the continuation of a deed drawn up in Hayy Gaon's court we find mentioned "a copy of a letter from our Lord Hayy, of blessed memory, to our Master Elhanan". The script is in a very bad state of preservation. The gaon confirms the receipt of the *ruq'a* (maybe a brief letter, perhaps a payment order) from Elhanan, and in the continuation he deals with a hala-

the *recto*. 37, for instance, appears to be in his handwriting as well. The matter of this scribe (who, I assume, is but Shemariah b. Elhanan) is discussed also by Glatzer, in his dissertation, II, 54-56. Here also belongs the problem of the identity of Abraham b. Isaac b. Abraham b. Daniel b. Isaac, nicknamed Ibn al-Baqara. His name, and also those of his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, are found in several manuscripts copied by the above-mentioned scribe, in colophons of ownership, and various other Geniza manuscripts. He clearly belonged to the beginning of the eleventh century. See also Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 290 (TS Loan 101); cf. Mann, *AJSLL*, 46 (1930), 273; *idem.*, *Jews*, II, 102f.; Friedman, *Tarbiz*, 43 (1933/34), 168 (ULC Or 1080, Box 3, f. 45). See details on similar colophons in Glatzer (above in this note), one of them belonging to the Library of the JTS, where there is also the date: AM 4772, i.e., 1011/12. Abraham b. al-Baqara is also mentioned in some merchants letters from the beginning of the eleventh century: in 144, *a*, line 35—a letter of Joseph b. Berekhiah to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, whose time is *ca.* 1010, and 222, *b*, line 1—the letter of Farah b. Abraham al-Fāsi, probably from Qayrawān, to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, where it says that a certain transaction was concluded *fi dār* (in the house of) b. al-Baqara. His son, Isaac b. Abraham al-Baqara, is mentioned in a record of a testimony in the hand of Sahlān b. Abraham, and it says that he was among the witnesses about a deed of receipt dated 14 March 1034: TS 8 Ja 2, f. 2. A quire of queries and responsa: TS Loan 101 was sent to: "Abraham b. Isaac b. Abraham b. Daniel b. Isaac of blessed memory, known as Ibn al-Baqara". It appears that there was a certain family connection between the al-Baqara family and the family of the Alexandrian merchant, Jacob b. Salmān al-Harīrī; when the latter was taken ill while in Fustat, he stayed in the house of Isaac (the father) and Abraham, sons of al-Baqara, who took very good care of him. Abraham, the grandfather, bequeathed much wealth and a house in Fustat, inhabited by Isaac b. al-Baqara; see 661, *a*, lines 10-13, 19. Also a certain Isma'īl b. Abraham, nicknamed "son of the calf", might have belonged to this family, and possibly it is his father, Abraham, who was nicknamed Ibn al-Baqara (son of the cow [*al-baqara*]: *al-'ijl*); this Isma'īl used to be a letter writer for the merchant Yahyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī; see 632, *b*, lines 53-54. Isaac b. Abraham al-Baqara is mentioned in *ca.* 1050, in a letter of Joseph b. Abraham to Nehorai b. Nissim: 754*a*, in the upper margin, wherefrom it is evident that he stayed in Fustat. Isaac b. al-Baqara was owing the writer 15 dirhams, and Nehorai is asked to collect them; possibly also the letter of Solomon b. Judah, in Gil, *Palest.*, II, 91-94 (no. 53), was addressed to Isaac b. al-Baqara, not to Isaac ha-Kohen b. Abraham, as supposed by me there. The letter of Sherira: 30, cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 112f.; Abramson (*ibid.*, 158) assumed that the letter was written before 985, when Hayy was appointed chief judge, see his discussion there; however, the mention of the deceased ruler as also the way Elhanan is referred to, point to the time I mentioned above. The good connections with Caliph al-Hākim in that period, also explain the recognition received from him for Elhanan, as chief judge (apparently: of the 'Babylonians' of Fustat), see TS 8 J 7, f. 13, and the discussion in Gil, *Hist.*, 578f. and the note to there; see also *idem.*, *Te'uda*, 7 (1987/88), 295; the letter to Sherira and Hayy: TS 20.49, in Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 123-130, and the notes there, mainly the details about preserved responsa and commentaries, which are parallel to Elhanan's queries. As to the personality called there 'the Rav', Abramson assumes (*ibid.*, 125) that he was Jacob b. Nissim. Khalfa b. Hākhmōn (Tākhmōn) the Alexandrian, is mentioned also in the letter of Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr: TS 13 J 25, f. 10, ed. Assaf, *Meqōrōt*, 117f. (in line 19), cf. Abramson, *ibid.*, 88, 125. As to the date of Elhanan's letter, Abramson (*ibid.*, 130 n. 44) assumed that it was 1004, as it mentions Adar I, and therefore concluded that it should have been Sel. 1314 (the remainder in the manuscript may be read both as 312 or 314), which, he writes, was AM 4764; but it should be: 4763, and the corresponding leap year (with an intercalated month of Adar) was AM 4761, therefore the year when Elhanan wrote his letter was Sel. 1312, and the date of the letter should have been February 1001. The letter about *shehīta* (*risālat al-burhān fi tadhkiyya*): Bodl Hunt 345 (Uri 294), see: Stenscheider, *JZWL*, 1 (1862), 313 nn. 18-20; *Hebr. Bibl.*, 4 (1861), 107. See also below, note 115.

chic matter, which seems to be an interdiction of marriage related to an issue of conversion to Judaism.

Another of Hayy's letters to Elḥanan was written on 7 February 1018. He mentions therein a letter he had written the same day about a transaction nothing about which was told to the gaon, in which a certain Abū Daniel al-Fāsī was involved. Therein the gaon asks Elḥanan to make efforts in the issue of a power of attorney for Joseph b. Bishr, in Fustat, so that he can collect monies owed to his brother, ʿAlī b. Bishr, in Baghdad.¹¹¹

(112) Faithful liaisons of the Babylonian yeshivot, especially that of Pumbedita, were Abraham b. Sahlān and his son Sahlān, who flourished in the first half of the eleventh century, and were the leaders of the Babylonian community in Fustat. Shemariah and his son Elḥanan were definitely undisputed scholars with Torah learning as their main vocation, while Abraham and his son Sahlān, though definitely learned people, belonged to the merchant class. Elsewhere I have dealt with their family history (see also below, sec. 331); their elders' names over a number of generations, though little more than their names, are known to us. The progenitor, six generations before Abraham (apparently in the second half of the ninth century), was Sanbāt, i.e., Shabbetai, and the family's origins were in Sicily. It seems that they dealt mainly in the perfume trade, but also in finances, for we find that in one place Abraham was referred to as "Barhūn b. Sahlān *ṣayrāfā* (Aramaic: the moneyer)", but also as Barhūn al-ʿAṭṭār, that is, "the perfume merchant". In the years preceding the gaonate of Solomon b. Judah the two became very close to the Palestinian gaon, but this connection weakened until Sahlān was ready to relinquish the title *ḥāvēr* which had been granted to him by the Palestinian yeshiva. Eventually the family held both Palestinian and Babylonian titles.

We must assume that the close ties this family had with Palestinian geonim were part of the geographical and political realities of the period, for Palestine was then subject to the rule of the Fatimids, the rulers of Egypt, and the head of the yeshiva was considered the head of the Jews in the Caliphate. He even had the authority to make community appointments, and certainly also had great authority concerning the Babylonian communities in Egypt and Palestine. It is against this backdrop that the ties between Shemariah and his son Elḥanan and the Palestinian yeshiva, and the fluctuations and vacillations concerning the ties with Babylonia should be understood. Nevertheless, it would seem that the personalities of Sherira and

¹¹¹ See the copy: 61; a copy of the deed subsists also in the Dropsie collection, no. 156, and was edited by Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 43. Therein is mention of a number of witnesses: ʿAyyāsh b. Moses, Mevorakh b. ʿImrān, Isaiah b. Judah, Nehemiah b. Shalom, Samuel ha-Kohen b. Aaron. Cf. Abramson, *Sinai*, 54 (1963/64), 31 n. 13; *idem*, *Bamerkazim*, 122 and n. 71. The letter about the two sons of Bishr: 39. Abū Daniel might be identical with Isaac the cantor, who had a son named Daniel, and was from Fās, and I assumed: Gil, *Hist.*, 507f., in the note, that it is he who wrote the poem *she'ēlōt ʿatīqōt*. See more details about the responsa of Sherira and Hayy to Shemariah and his son Elḥanan, in Abramson, *Bamarkazim*, 156f. (Shemariah); 105, 117-122, 130-133 (Elḥanan). It appears that quires containing collections of queries and responsa which belonged to Elḥanan remained with his daughter in Qayrawān, and were bought by one of the elder Tāhīrtis, Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn, see 125. See a short letter of Elḥanan to the cantor Abraham, a Fustatian, in which he is requested "to pray, early tomorrow, and on the following days, in honour of the person who passed away" whose identity is unknown to us; see ENA NS 19, f. 3.

Hayy tilted the scales, and in the end these Egyptian personages remained loyal to Babylonia. I have already mentioned Sherira Gaon's letter to Abraham b. Sahlān of about 1000, with remarks about Shemariah b. Elhanan. I have also mentioned the special tie the Pumbedita geonim, Sherira and Hayy, had with Sahlān, and how Hayy expressed his readiness to support him against his rivals. Worthy of mention is the strengthening of ties with Sura (1025). We have two letters of Samuel b. Hophni to the Fustat congregation. One is perhaps from 977, when Samuel was still in Pumbedita (where Sherira has been gaon for nine years). The letter is a request for support and donations and 'fifths', and Samuel complains that all the monies sent to Baghdad reach Sherira, whereas no part is given to him. The second letter is meant for a man who had left Baghdad and traveled to Egypt. Samuel was then already gaon in Sura, and he asks the addressee to press the Maghribis (there were many Maghribis in Fustat), and others too, about the shipment of monies for his yeshiva.

Except for that we have a letter, apparently from Dōsā b. Saadia, where an agreement between the addressee and Samuel b. Hophni was mentioned, according to which the addressee was to care for Israel b. Samuel b. Hophni after the gaon's death.

We also have three letters of Israel ha-Kohen Gaon b. Samuel. In the first, from April 1019, the gaon asks someone who was a prominent member of the congregation, apparently in Fustat, to take action on behalf of the Babylonian congregation and attract members: "draw them to us and do not let up". The second, written at the end of December 1020, was meant for one of the sons of Samuel ha-Kohen, b. Saadia, *rōsh kallā* and cantor, and expects a monetary contribution that should be sent via "Sahlān *ha-mumḥē* b. Abraham *ha-mumḥē* (meaning expert in law), the beloved son of the beloved". The third letter has ideational content dealing with principles of faith that I will be elaborating on below.¹¹²

(113) There was another connecting conduit between the Babylonian yeshivot and Fustat, that of the Ibn ʿAwkal family, the father and son, Jacob and Joseph. This family occupied an important position in the economic life of Egypt in the first half of the eleventh century. I will be dealing with

¹¹² See details about these two personalities, and conclusion about their attitude towards the yeshivot of Palestine and Babylonia: Gil, *Hist.*, 592-594, and also: Bareket, *Shaf'ir*, 165-187. See the document no. 3a, in Gil, *Te'uda*, 7 (1991), 311, where on the *verso* we find the name of Sahlān's father: Abraham b. Shabbetai. Sahlān b. Abraham was also involved in commerce, see two letters of the merchant Nissim b. Ḥalfōn (of the sons of the Benaiah family), apparently from Tinnīs, from 1046, to Nehorai b. Nissim: 584, a, line 6; he received from Sahlān 32 1/8 dinars; 585, b, lines 10-11: Sahlān is involved in deals, and has to prepare an accounting related to a dispute between the writer of the letter and Ibn al-Wāsiṭī. See more on the origin of Abraham b. Sahlān *infra*, in note 331. The letters of Samuel b. Hophni: 47, 48. Concerning the first letter cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 147f., who finds here a proof that the dispute in Pumbedita continued even after the demise of the gaon Nehemiah b. Kohen Sedeq. As to the second letter, see the opinion of Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 49 (1979/80), 200, who denies, for reasons which are unclear to me, the possibility that the addressee travelled to Egypt. The mention of David b. Bābshād, who was a Fustatian, proves that indeed the letter was sent there. The letter assumed to be of Dōsā: 60, cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 153. The letters of Israel: 62, 63, 65. Solomon ha-Kohen b. Saadia had two sons: Sar Shālōm and Menūḥa; see Gil, *Palest.*, II, 27f. (no. 28). The Palestinian gaon, Shemaiah, together with the chief judge, Ḥananiah b. Joseph, proclaimed a ban on them; it is plausible that the conflict was generated by the competition between Palestine and Babylonia.

it separately (below, sec. 378 and after) and we shall also be seeing the involvement of this family, of Babylonian (perhaps Persian) origin, that emigrated first to the Maghrib, then to Egypt, in the ties between the Maghrib and the Babylonian yeshivot. A number of letters from Babylonia attest to the abundance of honor and praise that were bestowed by the heads of the Babylonian yeshivot on the Ibn ʿAwkal family. A fragment of a letter Sherira and Hayy wrote to Jacob *alūf* b. Joseph ʿAwkal contains much praise. It can be deduced that he attained his title *alūf* because of 'compassion' for the yeshiva. Wisdom, intelligence, honor for the Torah, and acquaintance with the great scholars of his generation were ascribed to Jacob. There is no doubt that Jacob did not in fact belong to the stratum of scholars. He visited Babylonia, and preserved in this fragment are expressions of sorrow over his departure when he set out to return home: "because he was like one of them (the scholars) in Torah". Towards him, as well, gratitude is directed in a way similar to that addressed to Abraham b. Sahlān, for the *taqqānōt*, the regulations instituted in Fustat that were due to "the generosity of Ibn ʿAwkal". It appears that what was intended were the decisions taken by the Babylonian congregation concerning money matters for the yeshiva, such as sending income from the ritual slaughter fees, and the like. To this letter another letter was attached that was meant to be sent, via Fustat, to Jacob b. Nissim in Qayrawān, with responsa "on the marvelous and cherished queries" of his and a tract written by Hayy especially for him "in the language of the Ishmaelites", "explaining the paths of the Talmud", "and even for the groping", in other words, a kind of Talmud study primer for beginners. Another fragment preserves only the introductory statements, with greetings for the son, Joseph. Also mentioned there are earlier letters sent to him with requests to the people of Fustat by the Pumbedita yeshiva and the yeshiva's responsa on queries. After the death of Jacob b. ʿAwkal, Hayy mentions the son, Joseph, in a letter written (apparently) to Jacob b. Nissim in Qayrawān on 11 August 1006. Joseph is still not referred to as *alūf*, only his father is so referred to: Jacob *alūf*, with a blessing for the deceased. Joseph is first called *alūf* on 9 February 1007, in Hayy's letter to some brothers of Fās: Abū'l-Faraj (Joseph) *alūf*.

There is no knowledge of direct ties between the Ibn ʿAwkal family and Sura. Samuel b. Hophni in one of his letters expresses the tension prevailing between him and Hayy, his son-in-law, head of the Pumbedita yeshiva, because of the nature of the relations between the two yeshivot. He was embittered that Hayy had taken for himself monies intended for the two yeshivot, such as 150 dinar sent by the man in charge of funds from the Maghrib for the yeshivot, who in the meanwhile had died ("was gathered into Paradise"), "which did not reach us", and he asks that a warning be issued in this matter to Jacob b. ʿAwkal, for he was the person who dealt with shipping monies sent for Babylonia via Fustat.¹¹³

¹¹³ The fragment of the letter: 33; the *taqqānōt* in Abraham b. Sahlān's letter: 30, ix, line 8. The preamble: 34. The mention: 37; declared *alūf*: 38. Samuel b. Hophni's complaint: 52, a, lines 15-16; b, lines 10-12. Joseph b. Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal had close connections with the Palestinian yeshiva as well, see Gil, *Palest.*, by the index. 168 is a fragment of an anonymous letter, on vellum, to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, dealing with monies sent to the *rāṣ* (=rās) *al-mathība wa'l-ḥavūrā*, an expression which fits the Palestinian yeshiva.

(114) According to a generations-old tradition, the communities of Maghrib Jews were subject to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian yeshiva, the Sanhedrin. That was certainly the case in the pre-Islamic period. However, in the sources available to us, mainly from the eleventh century, we feel a strong Babylonian influence which appears to be much more relevant than this area's ties with Palestine. It seems that two factors were especially influential in creating this situation: Babylonia's clear priority over Palestine in the spiritual sphere, that of knowledge and study of *halākhā*, and a large scale emigration of Jews from Babylonia to the Maghrib, a fact I will deal with below (sec. 241). This emigration is documented at the beginning of the tenth century, but it seems that the westward migration of Babylonians took place during previous generations as well, the Muslim conquest having removed the partitions between these two parts of the world.

Echoes of the struggle between Palestine and Babylonia concerning influence over the Maghrib communities are found mainly in the arguments of Pirqoy b. Bāboy directed at the Maghrib and Spain, with a bitter complaint against those who still taught the customs of Palestine.

In an article that appeared in 1905, Büchler dealt extensively with the issue of the ties between the Babylonian yeshivot and the Maghrib. The central motif of this study was that in the earlier period, especially the ninth and tenth centuries, we only find ties with Sura. In other words, the Maghribis and the Spaniards would not usually turn to Pumbedita, and only beginning with the period of Hananiah Gaon b. Judah (937-943) did the ties with this yeshiva, too, begin. Büchler finds the evidence for these ties mainly in the fact that in Hayy Gaon's time we notice significant differences in the formulas of marriage contracts between those of Qayrawān and those of Pumbedita, for the Maghrib acted according to the Sura tradition. To secure his view he cites the responsa of the Maharam (Meir of Rothenburg; thirteenth century): "The Lord caused me to have before me responsa brought from the city of Ifrīqā; a voluminous book, composed of some responsa received by the scholars of Ifrīqā on queries sent to the geonim of Babylonia and its yeshivot; and at the head of each responsum it is said that it was written by R. Naṭrūnai b. R. Hillai, head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsīya, to our Lord and Master Judah b. R. Saul", etc. He also cites the responsa of Ṣemaḥ, the chief judge of the Gate of the exilarch, and Naṭrūnai (c. 850) to Nathan b. Hananiah and to the same Judah b. Saul, in Qayrawān. In matters of ritually impure food, in Qayrawān they acted according to the ruling of Yehudai Gaon b. Naḥmān (757-761), which Büchler considered to be proof of the antiquity of the ties with Sura. Further on there were ties with Naḥshōn Gaon (ca. 875), Ṣemaḥ Gaon b. Ḥayyim (ca. 885), Hillai Gaon (ca. 900), and, in an even later period, a query to Dōsā Gaon b. Saadia (ca. 1010). Indeed, one may assume that there were even earlier ties with Sura, namely with an early gaon whose name was Hillai, and this possibility might refer to Hillai b. Hananiah (probably, 812-816). According to Büchler, the queries to Pumbedita began when the Sura yeshiva was temporarily closed towards the end of the tenth century.

Some support for this view, at least for the fact that strong ties existed with the Sura yeshiva, may be gleaned from the fragment of a letter from Sura to a community, with criticism that they were no longer maintaining the ties with Sura as in the time of Naṭrūnai Gaon b. Hillai. At that time

they would send contributions via Abraham b. Bahlūl, and there is mention of "trustees of the yeshivot", while recently "the congregation has been neglectful in giving donations".

However, a letter we have mentioned (above, sec. 100) proves that the Pumbeditans sought to establish ties with Qayrawān at the time of Hayy Gaon b. David, at around 850. It mentions the same Judah b. Saul to whom, according to the evidence presented above, of the Maharam, Naṭrūnai b. Hillai had written. Aside from this, we have the abovementioned Karaite (sec. 100) in his polemic against the Rabbanites. From him we learn that at about 840 the Maghrib was already sending queries to Pumbedita, as well. This was the time of the geonim Isaac b. Ḥananiah (Hūnai) and Joseph b. Ravrevay, which I have already mentioned. Afterwards we know of the connection of the Maghrib with Pumbedita starting with the first half of the tenth century, the time of a responsum by Ḥananiah Gaon b. Judah to the community of Nafūsa. In one of his letters to the Maghrib, Sherira Gaon cites a *midrāsh* in order to prove that "our ancestors ordered us to follow (the sages of their generation, each of them) to his place". Behind this statement lies the idea that it is fitting and acceptable to simultaneously maintain various centers. Further on he expresses a harsh complaint against Maghribis who had severed their ties with Pumbedita, a process that began, he says, in the previous generation: "From the time your fathers became silent the yeshiva began to decline and now its decline continues". He also issues warnings about the punishment from Heaven for those abandoning the yeshiva. Therefore, this again is clear-cut evidence about the ties with Pumbedita that had existed in the first half of the tenth century.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ See on the connections between the Maghribi communities with Palestine and with Babylonia, in Hirschberg, *Hist.*, 299-304. Ben-Sasson, *Shalem*, 5 (1986/87), 31-34; *idem*, *Ṣemīḥat ha-q.*, 410ff., and see in this book, by the index, discussions on Qayrawān personalities that I mention below. Pirqoy b. Bāboy: Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/31), 396f., cf. Ben-Sasson, *ibid.*, 34 nn. 11, 12. See Büchler, *REJ*, 50 (1905), 147, 158ff., 161, 163, and see his references. See also Friedman, *Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 (1983-1986), 55-59, and also: *Marriage*, I, 245ff.; see the responsum of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai "to our Master Nathan, son of our Master Saul", in matters of mourning, in Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, *Or zar῿a*, 86a; (one should correct there: should be: BT *Megillā*, 23b.) See also Isaac Ibn Ghayyāth, *Shā'arē S.*, 37 (Rav Naṭrūnai!). Hillai Gaon: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 90 (no. 199); Hirschberg, *Tōledōt*, I, 228f.; the responsum of Meir of Rothenburg (the Maharam), 193 (no. 99). In the opinion of Groner, *Pe'amim*, 38 (1988/89), 49, the Hillai mentioned regarding the relations with the Maghrib cannot be but Hillai b. Naṭrūnai, who is "more famous". The Sura fragment: 46. See also Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 51 n. 2, and there some references regarding the ties of a number of Sura geonim with the Maghrib: Ṣemāḥ Gaon b. Hayyim, *Sefer ha-p.* (Budapest), 80; Saadia Gaon to the scholars of Qayrawān, *Shā'arē ṣ.*, 18a-19a; Dōsā Gaon b. Saadia, in Wertheimer, *Qehillat shelōmō*, 72. Nahshōn Gaon: *Sefer ha-p.* (Budapest), 119. See also 64, the letter of Israel ha-Kohen Gaon b. Samuel to somebody bearing the title *alūf*, apparently in the Maghrib, and there the subject is conveyance of books he asked for, from the Sura yeshiva; it is implied that the *alūf* served as a kind of adviser, as the gaon writes that he endeavored to act in accordance with his advise and to reconcile his adversaries, but the success was only a limited one. On the matter of the earliness of the ties with Pumbedita see also Rosenthal, *Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 (1983/86), 598ff.; Hayy b. David: 4. The responsum to Nafūsa: *Shā'arē ṣedeq*, 26b (no. 26); however, in *Geon. mizr. u-mā'ar.*, no. 47, it is ascribed to Nahmān (? certainly an error) Gaon; cf. *Shā'arē ṣedeq*, 99b (no. 1); 56a (no. 16). Sherira's letter: 23; he might have meant those who preferred the authority of Palestine. Indeed, in 960, people of the Rhine communities also address their queries to Palestine, see Gil, *Hist.*, 498, and the references there. In around 970 a new head of the yeshiva, from a priestly family, 'Ezrūn, is appointed in Palestine. Possibly in his days and those of his successors, the competition with

(115) After having presented general considerations about the ties of the Babylonian yeshivot with the Maghrib, I will now survey their special ties with the Maghrib communities, beginning with the periphery and concluding with Qayrawān. There were early ties between Sijilmāssa and the Babylonian yeshivot. Evidence for the antiquity of Jewish presence in this city may be found in the information recorded by Bakrī that the city's masons were Jews who were experts in the field. Apparently there was an emigration of Jews from Iraq to Sijilmāssa. A letter of circa 1015, by Joseph b. Berekhaiah to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, deals, among other things, with the bequest of one Yifrah al-Baghdadi, who died in Sijilmāssa and left property there (also in Qayrawān; his inheritors at that time were already in Egypt, in Fustat). Mentioned in the same period are queries sent by "our Lord and Master Joseph b. 'Amram", head of the court of the city of Sijilmāssa, apparently to the Sura gaon, Šemah Šedeq b. Isaac, and the query about (the permissibility of) eating locusts that the "people of Sijilmāssa asked of our Lord Hayy Gaon". Sherira Gaon, in his letter to Jacob b. Nissim, asks that he delegate one of his students to copy the commentary that he sent (which commentary is not known), and that he send the copy to (the above) Joseph b. 'Amram and "our *havērim*, the cherished scholars in Sijilmāssa". This leader of the Sijilmāssa Jews is also mentioned in a letter of Joseph b. Labrāṭ to Jacob Ibn 'Awkal: Joseph b. 'Amrus.¹¹⁵

Babylonia was enhanced, Gil, *ibid.*, 660. It appears that beginning with the time of the Fatimid conquest of Palestine, the status of the Palestinian yeshiva in the Maghrib was enhanced, as a new common political framework was created. In Qirqisānī, I, 5, there is a hint about the priority still enjoyed by Palestinian customs in the Maghrib, around the beginning of the tenth century; he was informed—he writes—by somebody, about Jews in the Maghrib who do not immerse themselves after the sexual intercourse (i.e., they observe the Babylonian custom, as grasped by him), but when asked about, would deny having behaved this way; cf. on this: Lewin, *Ōsar hīllūf*, 24, and Dinari, *Te'uda*, 3 (1983), 25 n. 58. See the review about early geonim who had ties of queries and responsa with the Maghrib: Hillai, Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, Šemah b. Hayyim, Saadia b. Joseph, in: Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 179f.; see also: 16, the letter of Nehemiah ha-Kohen, gaon of Pumbedita, to the Saḥāqus community (via Nisīn b. Benjamin), of November 962.

¹¹⁵ Bakrī, *Maghrib*, 148. Yifrah the Baghdadian: 145, margin right. Joseph b. 'Amram: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 32f.; the query about the locusts is preserved in two manuscripts: TS 10 G 2, first edited by Schechter, *Saadyana*, 62f., and again by Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 12 (1940/41), 29-48, who identified it as belonging to Nissim b. Jacob's *Megillat setārim*; see the matter of the locusts in Assaf, *ibid.*, 37. The other manuscript is Bodl Hunt 345, see in Goldberg, the introduction to the *risāla* of Judah b. Quraysh, xvi ff.; see also Stenschneider, *JZWL*, 1 (1862), 313 n. 18; cf. Neubauer, *Catalogue*, no. 793 (vol. I, 155-165). This is a compendium of Jacob Ibn Jāmi' on laws of *sheḥīṭā*. See also Abramson, *Nissim Gaon*, 239f. Judah b. Quraysh lived in Sijilmāssa, see Goldberg, *ibid.*; and the editor's introduction in the Becker edition of the *Risāla*. See more on responsa to Sijilmāssa: Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 46, 55. In around 1020, Sijilmāssa was the theater of serious events, when many died by sword or by famine, see the letter of the sons of Berekhaiah to Ibn 'Awkal, 149, line 31ff., with a mention of a severe drought. As to the sword, it probably refers to the struggles between Sunnis and Shiites, and the slaughter of the Shiites, as also to the battles led by the young ruler of the Maghrib, al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs, against Ḥammād b. Buluqqīn, see Idris, *Berbérie*, 143-149, 153-155. It would not be perhaps too daring to assume that such a strange matter like the eating of dead locusts, was connected with the realities of that time of starvation. On the other hand, Sijilmāssa was famous for its wealth, many of its people were rich, as it was a center of wool spinning and the production of the *izr*, a big shawl worn by women, of a quality superior to that of the Egyptian *qaṣab*; see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 46. One should also notice that, on the other hand, Sijilmāssa was an important center of the devotees of the Palestinian yeshiva, and it is from there that the priestly family came, whose descendants

(116) The city of TILIMSĀN, too, was in contact with the Babylonian yeshivot: "These are the queries that our brethren, the scholars in the city of Tilimsān in the land of the setting sun... sent to our Master Hayy", etc. Queries to Sherira and Hayy in Pumbedita were also sent from Tāhirt: "Queries of Tāhirt to our Master Hayy". It was in this city that the Tāhirtis, a ramified family of merchants, whose many active descendants we shall encounter below, in Qayrawān and Fustat, originated. They also had public community status and ties to the yeshivot; Nehorai b. Nissim was also a member of this family on his mother's side. Evidence of Pumbedita's ties in the mid-tenth century with SAFĀQUS, is in the November 962 letter of Nehemiah ha-Kohen, gaon of Pumbedita, to Nissim b. Benjamin of Safāqus, describing the dire state of the yeshiva when the contributions ceased after the demise of his predecessor in the gaonate, Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, and after the internal conflict that took place there.

A responsum of Sherira Gaon testifies to the ties with the MASĪLA community: "This query presented to you was received by us this year, from the city of Masīla". Masīla, also known as Muḥammadiyya, was founded by the first of the Fatimid rulers, °Ubaydallah, in 927, and developed into a large city. A legal document from Fustat, on 30 August 1032, mentions Yamāma b. Jacob b. Aaron (Hārūn) b. al-Jāsūs al-Masīlī; in other words, the great granddaughter of a Masilite Jew who had apparently settled there when the city was founded.

QĀBIS was an important center of ties with the Babylonian yeshivot. In a query to Hayy Gaon, it is stated that "Mr. Abraham Qābisī Gaon, of blessed memory, who was gaon in the year 1140 Sel., was an expert in furrows (read: *shūḥōt*, instead of *sīḥat*) of palm trees", and Mann had already assumed that the reference was to a Qābis man, Abraham b. Sherira who became gaon (816-828) in Pumbedita. Mann even elaborated on the assumption, saying this was a Maghribī family that had emigrated to Babylonia, where one of its descendants became gaon.

In the eleventh century, people of Qābis, Nehemiah b. Obadiah and Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi^c, in queries sent to Hayy Gaon, mention: "We have seen a responsum of our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai Gaon...." This is certainly proof of ties that existed with Sura in the mid-ninth century. The information about the ties increases, of course, at the time of Sherira and Hayy. A complete quire published by Harkavy contains responsa sent by Hayy Gaon to Jacob and Abraham, sons of Moses (b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi^c) of Qābis. Sherira Gaon, so it is stated in a Bodleian manuscript, in one of his responsa, interpreted the mishnaic term *kūkhliyār* (Sabbath vi:3: another

became leaders of this yeshiva and its geonim in the eleventh century; see Gil, *Hist.*, 660-665, 671f., and *idem*, *Palest.*, III, 392f., on the connections. The 'Rav', Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph, the spiritual leader of the Maghribis in Fustat in the second half of the eleventh century, was also a scion of a Sijilmāssa family, see *idem*, *Hist.*, 269f., and in *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/91), 298f.; Ben-Sasson, *Zion*, 51 (1986), 391. Sherira's letter: 32, a, at the beginning; see the letter of Joseph b. Labrāt: 109, line 20, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 443, and the document TS 10 K 20, f. 9, in Mann, *REJ*, 72 (1921), 301, and *idem*, *Texts*, I, 653: "responsa to the people of Sijilmāssa" (in a list of books). A Fustatian who visited Baghdad in the second half of the twelfth century, when the gaon there was Samuel b. Eli (Ibn al-Dastūr), met there with a visitor from Sijilmāssa, Solomon, who was about to pass through Fustat on his way home, and the writer asks the addressees to offer him a kind reception; see 88.

version: *kūliyār*) for the people of Qābis. Jacob b. Nissim writes from Qayrawān to the people of Qābis ("to the dear scholars") and after a most florid introduction he informs them that the queries that had been referred to the gaon and to the yeshiva court (i.e., to Sherira and Hayy) had reached him on Sabbath eve, but he did not manage to look into them for possible corrections, because the letter carrier, upon instructions from the people of Qābis, was in a rush to continue on his way. Nevertheless, Jacob b. Nissim attached a letter of recommendation to "Abū Bishr treasurer of the yeshiva" (i.e., Jacob Ibn °Awkal; what he wrote to him is not clear, but it seems he recommended that the responsa be sent quickly to their destination).

Members of the IBN JĀMI° family were central personages in the Qābis community and in its ties to the yeshivot. I have already mentioned Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi° and his sons, Jacob and Abraham, in connection with responsa sent to them by Sherira and Hayy. One of the geonim—I believe it was Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Hophni, gaon of Sura—turns to Jacob Ibn Jāmi° in a letter, the gist of which was a recommendation for one Abraham b. Solomon, who had arrived in the Maghrib from Baghdad. We also have a letter written by Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi° to Joseph Ibn °Awkal, with confirmation of the arrival of a bundle of responsa from the yeshiva (certainly from Hayy Gaon). It mentions that monies, and also hastily composed queries, were sent to the yeshiva. The funds were sent via Samuel (Isma°l) b. Abraham (Barhūn) al-Tāhirtī, who passed through Qābis in a caravan making its way from Qayrawān to Fustat, that he left early so as not to travel on the Sabbath. As to the queries, these were sent via a Muslim in the same caravan. Since the queries had been penned in haste, they later prepared a new, seemly, copy that they also sent to Ibn °Awkal, in Fustat. This was the copy they asked be sent to the gaon.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ Tilimsān: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 14ff (no. 37); cf. *Tesh. ha-g. tor. sh. rish*, II, 31 (no. 9); *Ge'ōne mizr. u-ma'ar.*, 31a (no. 133). Tilimsān was a center of wool and hemp production, in that the city's Jews probably had an important share; see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 870f.; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 485. A certain Judah of Tilimsān is mentioned in a letter of Nathan b. Nehorai to his uncle Nehorai b. Nissim; Judah has travelled from Alexandria to Fustat carrying a letter to Nehorai, in the sixties of the eleventh century. Tāhirt: see Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 443, citing TS 10 G 5, f. 5, and see Poznanski, *ZfHB*, 12 (1908), 119, who has a list of books, from TS Ar 51.57 (which is the correct shelf-number). See queries sent by "Samuel b. Abraham (=Isma°l b. Barhūn) Tāhirtī", together with Bahlūl b. Joseph and Abraham b. Isaac b. Ūrai: Harkavy, *resp.*, 7 (no. 16), and cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 483f. Safāqūs: see 16, and notice there the addition above line 9. The query sent from Masīla: Assaf, *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/34), 115; see on this city: Idris, *Berberie*, 484f.; the court writ: 143; Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 323, assumed that it refers to a Qābis family, a part of which lived in Marseilles, but it is Masīla in the Maghrib. Abraham Gaon b. Sherira, said to be from Qābis, was gaon of the Pumbedita yeshiva until 828, see Sherira, *Letter*, 111; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 39: until 836; apparently Ibn Da'ūd assumed that he was gaon in Sura, see editor's note *ibid.*, 51f. (to lines 82-83). Hayy: *Lyck*, no. 33, cf. parallel versions in *Ōsar ha-g. to Sūkā*, (the responsa), 31 (no. 67). See Mann, *ibid.*, 484. Naṭrūnai's responsum to Qābis: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 31 (no. 67); the queries from Qābis: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 27, 149, 167, 169, 179, 218. See Neubauer, *JQR*, 6 (1893/94), 223, who has a parallel version, from Bodl MS Heb d 46, f. 6, which is the beginning of the quire used by Harkavy: "these queries were presented before us, by the pleasant in our eyes Master Nehe-miah son of Master Obadiah and our Master the son of our Master Samuel b. Jāmi°, may they be remembered in peace", etc. See a similar version in a fragment in the handwriting of Joseph b. Jacob the Babylonian: TS AS 151.62. See on the quire from Qābis: Groner, *Alei sefer* (1975/76), 9f.; there is in Wertheimer, *Qehillat sh.*, 3ff., "a collection of queries sent to our Master Hayy from the city of Qābis", translated into Hebrew by the editor. See in

(117) There are relatively many testimonies about the ties between Pumbedita and the Fās community. A Parma manuscript contains the preamble of a responsum of Sherira Gaon: "These are the queries which the people of the Fās congregation submitted to our Master Sherira Gaon Head of the Yeshiva b. Ḥananiah Head of the Yeshiva b. Judah Head of the Yeshiva; and to Hayy, judge of the Gate, b. Sherira" etc. And further: "to all our Masters and their students, and elders and groups who live in Fās Ashīr, after having been displaced from the city of Fās, kind and distinguished people", etc.

The yeshiva received the queries on "the *kallā* of Adar in the year 1298", February 987. In an indirect manner there is here also information about the deportation of the Fās Jews to Ashīr. Ashīr was a new, fortified city built by the local Ṣanhāja Berber ruler, Zīrī, and his son Buluqqīn after him, between 935-978. We do not know when that deportation was decreed or how long it lasted and whether all or only part of the Jews of Fās were deported. According to Yāqūt—who wrote more than two hundred years later, but used information from earlier sources—Fās had the largest Jewish community of all the cities in the Maghrib. The exile was apparently a transitory and partial episode, for we find "queries of those people of Fās" that reached Sherira Gaon without the mention of Ashīr. In the letter, written in about 1017, by the sons of Berekhiah to Ibn ʿAwkal, there is mention of monies sent through them from Ashīr to the yeshiva of Pumbedita. Thus it appears that because of that deportation, or perhaps without any connection to it, a Jewish population gathered in this new city, that maintained the traditional ties with Pumbedita. There is also an allusion to a responsum of Sherira Gaon's to "the people of Fās", in a text where both the beginning and end are missing: "This is the interpretation of our Master Hayy Gaon, of blessed memory, and we have found a responsum of our Master Sherira Gaon of blessed memory about a man who dedicated all his belongings to the poor, and did not write 'from [now and] after death' and died", etc. Further down it states: "This responsum was formulated by our Master Sherira Gaon of blessed memory and after him it was sealed and brought as a conclusion by our Master Hayy of blessed memory, all scholars of the yeshiva

Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 44 (1900), 142f. his discussion on some of the views expressed in those queries, such as the predetermined length of days (the *ajal*), as related to Isaiah 38:5: "go, and say to Hezekiah.... I will add unto thy days fifteen years"; on the reason for Jonah the prophet's flight, and more. *Kūkhliyār*: Bodl. Cat. 2862, no. 10, cf. Mann, *ibid.*, 483, and see *idem* in *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 215, with more references to responsa of Sherira and Hayy to people of Qābis. See on *kūkhliyār* also the commentary of Nathan, *av* of the yeshiva, in Assaf, *Teg. ha-g.*, 306: "... R. Sherira said something put around the head like a turban", referring to BT, *Yōmā* 25a, which has: *be-khūliyār*, and there more various readings; the word's origin is apparently from Greek, or Latin, see Krauss, *Lehnm.*, II, 282f. See also Hurvitz, *Hadarom*, 46 (1977/78), 162. Jacob b. Nissim, see 36, cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 100ff. who has more details about queries sent to Sherira and Hayy by people from Qābis. See on the Ibn Jāmi' family: Mann, *Texts*, I, 185f. See 66, the letter to Jacob b. Moses Ibn Jāmi', and see in Harkavy, *Resp.*, the headings of nos. 315 and 329. The letter to Ibn ʿAwkal: 142. Moses Ibn Jāmi' mentions there (line 16) his two sons: Jacob and Abraham. See Harkavy, *Resp.*, 167: "those queries, sent by Mr. Abraham b. R. Moses b. Jāmi', from the city of Qābis which is in the west, in the name of the important elder, the leader Mr. Moses the elder son of Mr. Jāmi'". See also blessings from Hayy Gaon to Abraham b. Moses, *ibid.*, 172, and there also the blessings for "our beloved, your brother, the mighty scholar, may his ambience be blessed".

being present". Also "queries sent by the people of Fās to our Master Sherira Gaon of blessed memory" that were answered by Hayy Gaon. Hayy Gaon did not only send responsa on halachic matters to the Fās congregation, he also sent "open letters" that certainly dealt with the monetary needs of the yeshiva and matters concerning the local community. We also have a letter of Hayy Gaon's, written on 9 February 1007, to two brothers in Fās, Abraham and Tanḥūm, sons of Jacob. Mentioned therein, are shipments of responsa that were entrusted to Abū'l-Tayyib ʿImrān b. Hillel, apparently a Baghdadi who had traveled westwards, to Egypt. All the people of the yeshiva, himself included, relied only on these two brothers and on Abū'l-Faraj (undoubtedly, Joseph b. ʿAwkal). The Fās congregation also had ties with the Sura yeshiva, as shown in the letter sent to them by the gaon Samuel b. Hophni, about the year 1000, which, among other statements, contained extreme praise for this community, the people of "the old city of Fās". There is also a letter of his, written in August or September 1004, to the same two brothers mentioned above, Abraham and Tanḥūm sons of Jacob, to whom Hayy Gaon also had written.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ MS Parma, Stern 30, f. 12b, see Müller, *Mafteah*, 54; Kobak, *Jeschurun*, 5 (1865/66), 137; Lewin, *JJLG*, 7 (1909), 254, who has the corrected version; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 484; 11 (1920/21), 438; Assaf, *Hashiloah*, 39 (1920/21), 448. The Tilimsān Jews were also expelled to Ashīr, see Harkavy, *Resp.*, 15 (no. 38): "Reuben had land in Tilimsān; as they were expelled to Ashīr it remained derelict; after some years they all returned to Tilimsān", etc. In the continuation the time of his mother's *ketubbā* is mentioned, in connection to the matter of that land: 2 Kislev (Sel.) 1313 (see Harkavy's note), i.e., 21 November 1001, almost 15 years after those queries of the Fās exiles; on Ashīr, see Bakrī, *Maghrib*, 60; cf. Idris, *Berbérie*, 14, 487f.; some identify it as Yashīr, some 100 km. South east of Algiers; others say it is Benya; see the article "Ashīr" in *El²* (by Marçais); see ʿIbādī, *RIEM*, 5 (1957), 212 n. 1; that deportation might have been instigated by Buluqqīn, in his battles with the Umayyads of Spain and their retainers in the Maghrib, who were the rulers of Fās during some 30 years, 980-1012; see the article "Fās" in *El²* (by Le Tourneau); cf. Hirschberg, *Hist.*, 105. According to Ibn ʿIdhārī, 240, Buluqqīn conquered Fās on 24 Shaʿbān (AH) 368, 26 March 979, which might have been the time of the deportation. The Qayrawān community, the genuine protégés of the Zirids, hastened to offer aid to the Fās exiles in Ashīr, as shown by a panegyric in praise of "a saviour and redeemer, like a noble of Judaea, Judah b. Joseph (whom we shall meet below) a leader (appointed) by God", etc. And there is also a poem, in which a passage says "... Blessed be He who sentenced the (localities of the) neighborhood of Fās for their disobedience and expelled them from their cherished (place)... as we went into exile and made us melt away, in haste and commotion", etc., in Geniza fragments which had belonged to the Berlin community, see: Schirrmann, *MGWJ*, 76 (1932), 348; Assaf, *Mi-sifrūt ha-g.*, 220f. That period, of the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries, was also the period of the rise of the brothers Jacob and Joseph Ibn Jū, dealers in silk, mentioned by Ibn Daʿūd in the *Book of Trad.*, 50f.; cf. Hirschberg, *Töledot*, I, 76; see on the name Jū, probably an abbreviation of Yijū: Goitein, *Speculum*, 29 (1954), 191 n. 17. See on the Jews of Fās: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 842. The queries of the people of Fās to Sherira Gaon: TS Loan 101, cf. Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 290. See the mention of Sherira Gaon: "we found in a responsum of our Lord the Gaon, may the memory of this virtuous and holy (man) be blessed, to the people of Fās", etc., in a responsum of Hayy Gaon to Nissim b. Jacob (about the *minḥā* prayer on a Saturday) in: Warnheim, *Qevūṣat h.*, 109f.; the sons of Berekhiah: 148, lines 9ff.; the matter of the pious foundation: TS 20.91, lines 9ff. "Queries sent", see: Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 427, from an ENA manuscript. Open letters of Hayy Gaon to the people of Fās are mentioned in his letter to an *alūf* in Qayrawān, see 37; to the two brothers: 38. Cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 440f.; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 123ff.; mentioned in that letter is also the Aghmāt community, who sent him 70 dinars with Khallūf b. Joseph; cf. Idrīsī, *Maghrib*, 69, where it is implied that Aghmāt had the biggest Jewish population in its area. Abraham and Tanḥūm, sons of Jacob, are mentioned also in the caption of the responsa of Sherira and Hayy to "queries

(118) More important is the great amount of information preserved about the ties of the Babylonian yeshivot and the QAYRAWĀN congregation. This city was the metropolis of Ifrīqiya, the main center of the Fatimids in the first generations of their rule before they transferred their center to Egypt, and of the Zirids, the local rulers, leaders of the Ṣanhajites. It appears that the city became a drawing point for Jewish immigrants from Iraq and we shall see below (sec. 140) that the deposed exilarch, ʿUqbā, left Baghdad for Qayrawān at about 910, when he was forced into exile from Babylonia in the early days of Fatimid rule in Ifrīqiya. As far as we know, as early as the beginning of the ninth century the Qayrawānites were sending their queries to the geonim of Sura: Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob (ca. 825), Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai (c. 840), Sar Shālōm b. Boaz (c. 850) and Naṭrūnai b. Hillai (ca. 855). Also mentioned is their query to Hillai, perhaps Hillai b. Ḥananiah (c. 815, see above). About 880 "the Qayrawānites sent a query to our Master Šemaḥ [b. Ḥayyim] head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* in Mātā Maḥsiya [this is the correct reading] about Eldad ha-Danī who unexpectedly turned up among them from the unknown tribes of ancient Havilah, in the Land of Cush". Saadia Gaon maintained ties with the Qayrawānites before he left Egypt, at the beginning of the tenth century, while still in Fayyūm, according to the statements of Dūnash b. Tamīm, in his commentary on Saadia Gaon's *Sefer yeširā*: "Many times did the writings [of Saadia] reach our city called Qayrawān, to our Elder and Master Isaac b. Solomon, of blessed memory, with questions belonging to the profane learning while he was still in Pithom, before his departure to Babylonia, and our Master Isaac would show them to me while I was twenty years old".

Qayrawān, for many generations it seems, was a center of copying manuscripts from Babylonia. From there the copies were sent to the Maghrib communities and Egypt (or they were copied in Egypt while in transit to the Maghrib). We have the explicit testimony of Joseph b. Labrāt about it, in his letter to Jacob b. ʿAwkal. Qayrawān, to the same extent, served as a place where monies collected in the Maghrib communities for the yeshivot were concentrated, including monies collected in Spain and even Yemen (Tabāla), as well. From what we know regarding the eleventh century, these monies were concentrated there (this was certainly the custom earlier, as well), by one of the great international commercial families, such as in the specific case known to us, the Tāhirtīs, whose commercial ties reached

sent by (these two) who are of the Fās community". See, in Assaf, *Mi-sifrūt ha-g.*, 135, the fragment TS 13 F 2, f. 1a, and see also *idem*, *Madfē ha-yah.*, 2 (1926/27), 81. As stated above, in note 111, a responsum to the people of Fās is mentioned in 61, and also in Dropsie 156; based on a few words preserved from it, Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 43, identified the version to be similar to a responsum of Hayy Gaon about the rules of the *qaddish*, found in Ibn Ghayyāth, *Sha'arē s.*, II, 59; cf. Halper, *Cat.*, 79f. Several names are mentioned there, that appear to be of Baghdadians: ʿAyyāsh b. Moses, Mevorakh b. ʿImrān, Isaiah b. Judah. See more responsa of Sherira Gaon to the people of Fās: Assaf, *Ginzē q.*, 1933/34, 108ff. (from the David Sassoon Collection, no. 593); cf. Sassoon, *Ohel David*, 197-200. See also Abramson, *ʿInyānōt*, 101ff., who has more responsa to the people of Fās, and two persons of Fās are mentioned, Ḥayyim b. Obadiah and Samuel ha-Kohen b. Josiah. The letters of Samuel b. Hophni: 51, a, lines 6ff.; 49. See on a responsum of his to people of Fās: Assaf, *Hashiloah*, 39 (1920/21), 448 and n. 3.

many parts of the world and afforded relatively quick and secure dispatch of the funds.¹¹⁸

(119) A number of personages, at least from the standpoint of spiritual guidance, who were at the head of the Qayrawān community are known to us thanks to those ties. I have already mentioned Nathan b. Ḥanīna and Judah b. Saul, who flourished in the mid-ninth century. In one of his responsa, Sherira Gaon, referring to a responsum of ʿAmram b. Sheshnā (that the questioner had referred to) mentions Shabīb b. Jacob. According to Sherira, in that responsum ʿAmram Gaon stated that 83 years earlier the two yeshiva heads and the exilarch ruled that movable goods, as well as money, could also serve to collect sums to cover debts, or sums stated in a marriage contract. That is a well-known decision, made in 785, as already stated in Sherira Gaon's *Letter* (in the time of Hūna ha-Levi b. Isaac, the Pumbedita Gaon, in the year 1096 Sel., AD 785). Thus it follows that ʿAmram Gaon's responsum was written in 870 (i.e., 83 years later). Therefore, Shabīb b. Jacob flourished in the second half of the ninth century. In the time of Naḥshōn b. Isaac Ṣādōq, gaon of Sura (c. 875), we find "a query by R. Shabīb b. R. Jacob of Qayrawān". But Shabīb also had ties with Pumbedita, and there is mention of a responsum sent to him by the gaon Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Palṭoi (ca. 880); and I have already mentioned (above, sec. 100) the harsh resentment exhibited by Naḥshōn Gaon towards the Qayrawānites, who before presenting their query (concerning *mālōg* properties) to him, first turned to Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Palṭoi and to Mattathias in Pumbedita. The ties between Shabīb b. Jacob and the Babylonian yeshivot continued through the time of Hayy b. Naḥshōn (886-896), as evinced by a fragment of a responsum by an anonymous Sura gaon based on "our Lord and Master Hayy Gaon of Maḥsiya". From that fragment we know that he carried the title of *rōsh ha-pereq*, since we find it in the continuation: "*rōsh ha-pereq* our Master Shabīb b. Jacob and our Master Samuel" ("our Master Samuel" is not known from any other source).

The traditional connection with Sura continued afterwards, as well, after the Sura yeshiva's rehabilitation during the gaonate of Samuel b. Hophni. Evidence is in the fragments of his letter to Qayrawān of about 1008. The appointment of Joseph b. Berekhiah as trustee of the yeshivot in place of the deceased Jacob b. Nissim is mentioned there. The gist of the letter is a

¹¹⁸ See Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 179-183; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/17), 483; Eldad ha-Dani: see Epstein, *Eldad ha-Dani*, 1, and see *ibid.*, 9f., on the identity of Ṣemaḥ Gaon and on his style, as compared with another responsum of his, preserved in *Sefer ha-pardes*, and on p. 6, the Gaon's responsum, saying that they already heard about Eldad ha-Dani, from a certain Isaac b. Simḥa. See Harkavy, *Resp.*, 90 (end of no. 199): "as they found in the responsa of the early geonim, that their ancestors would send queries to our Master Hillai Gaon, of blessed memory", etc.; the author of the commentary: Dūnash b. Tamīm, see Mann, *Texts*, I, 74; Vajda, *REJ*, 107 (1946), 109f.; copy of a manuscript: 109, lines 16-18. The queries from Qayrawān, see Groner, *Alei sefer*, 2 (1975/76), 10ff.; see *ibid.*, 14, on the quire of the Adler collection, printed by Marmorstein, and also by Ginzberg (in the *Ginzē Sch.*). Transfers of money: see for instance 148, lines 9ff.; the nagid of Qayrawān, Abraham b. ʿAtā, was also much involved in money matters. The massive involvement in matters of monies of the yeshivot is to be observed also in 149, line 25, the letter of the sons of Berekhiah to Ibn ʿAwkal, written shortly after the death of the nagid; they had in mind to convene, in sukkōt, to discuss the many matters of the large sums of money destined for the yeshivot, that were seized in Fustat by the authorities; Ibn ʿAwkal is requested to help in arranging their dispatch.

request for financial assistance and dispatch of queries. Another letter of Samuel b. Hophni, similar to the previous one, contains a statement wherein the gaon presents himself to the Qayrawānites: "We are the Great of the yeshiva and its elder, there is none greater in wisdom or in years; the elders and scholars of the yeshiva are with us and sitting before us". Joseph b. Berekhiah, whom I shall be discussing, is appointed *pāqīd* and *ne'emān*, and *gizbār*, trustee and treasurer, and will be considered among the "teachers and taskmasters of charity". There is also information about the ties of Dōsā Gaon b. Saadia (1012-1018) with Qayrawān, whereto he writes, in response to a query about a deed, whose time of writing was the Sabbath. A letter from Qayrawān, written about 1010, to Joseph b. 'Awkal, mentions a problem of the distribution of funds sent from Qayrawān to the Babylonian yeshivot, and notes that it was decided to also grant part of them to Dōsā and the current gaon, Samuel b. Hophni. In the 1016 letter of the sons of Berekhiah, also sent to Joseph b. 'Awkal, we find particular concern for Dōsā's health, after he had fallen ill, thus it is implied, while being gaon of Sura. The succeeding gaon, Israel Ha-Kohen b. Samuel (1018-1033), maintained this tradition, as will be evinced by a Geniza document with a pre-ambule to his essay about prayer sent to the nagid, Abraham b. 'Atā' (Nathan): From "Israel ha-Kohen Gaon b. our Lord Samuel [ha-Kohen Gaon] son of a gaon, to (in Arabic:) our illustrious Master, flag of the religion and crown of the nation, our Lord and Master Abraham (nagid) of the Diaspora, son of our Lord and Master Nathan Head of the Communities, may the memory of the righteous be blessed; he is its author and he signed it", etc. Apparently, a member of the Baradānī family, Nahum b. Joseph, who had arrived at Qayrawān towards the end of the tenth century, helped to strengthen the Maghrib's ties with Sura and its gaon, Samuel b. Hophni. In a letter he sent to Samuel b. Hophni on 7 August 999, Nahum al-Baradānī mentions letters he had sent earlier from the Maghrib, including one sent the previous year (i.e., in 998) from Mahdiyya. He also mentions there a letter he had received from Samuel b. Hophni through Abū'l-Faraj Benjamin b. Moses b. Aaron (perhaps of the sons of Aaron b. 'Amram, the famous Baghdadi 'bankers', whom we shall meet below). The patriarch of the Baradānī family was Joseph the Cantor, father of this Nahum. The rest of Nahum's family remained in Baghdad, and in the letter Nahum expressed great concern for their welfare and about events in Baghdad. He asks the gaon to see to the education of Abū Manšūr, perhaps the *kunya* of one of his sons, or that of a younger brother. He should be prodded to learn Mishnā and Talmud, despite livelihood concerns. He also sent the gaon a power of attorney, for him to care of his *dūr*, i.e., compounds that Nahum owned in Baghdad. He sends a special greeting to Isaac, i.e., Isaac ha-Kohen b. Hophni, Samuel's brother, the chief judge of the Sura yeshiva. As we shall see below, Nahum al-Baradānī also maintained close ties with the Pumbedita yeshiva. It may be assumed that Nahum, apparently one of the wealthiest Babylonian merchants, contributed greatly to the strengthening of the ties of the Maghrib Jews, among whom he had now settled, in the city of Qayrawān, with Babylonia.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Shabīb b. Jacob: Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 27; see Sherira, *Letter*, 105; Hirschberg, *Hist.*, 197f. (about a responsum of an anonymous gaon, sent to Shabīb); a responsum to Shabīb is

(120) We also have information about Qayrawān's ties with Pumbedita, beginning with the end of the ninth century. The Pumbedita gaon, Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi, sends responsa in the matter of a deceased Qayrawān man whose heirs resided in Spain, and of a woman who had lost her marriage contract, and more of such matters (c. 880). Aaron (Khalaf) b. Joseph (Ibn Sarjāda) sent a responsum to Qayrawān regarding a man "who goes down into (i.e., gets) somebody else's ruin" (c. 950). In a letter of around 962, Sherira Gaon mentions "open letters" that he had sent to the congregation of Qayrawān during the gaonate of Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq, before Sherira became gaon. Definite proof of the depth of the ties with Qayrawān at the time of Sherira, is in the responsa he sent to the Maghrib, whose recipients have already been named above, and also the famed historical *Letter* he sent to Jacob b. Nissim, in Qayrawān, in 987. The ties were even strengthened during Hayy Gaon's time. We see that he maintains direct ties with a number of the notables of the Qayrawān congregation. Especially impressive is the letter he sent on 11 August 1006 to an *alūf* in Qayrawān, apparently Jacob b. Nissim. He insists upon the letter being read to the congregation and that copies be sent to other communities, for "the first ones have borne fruit". In fact, it would seem that the recipients of such letters copied and distributed them, for they would reach the farthest places. The text preserved in the Geniza is also a copy made in Fustat by Sahlān b. Abraham, as can be seen by the handwriting. Among the Qayrawānīte per-

mentioned also in TS 12.856, and in TS 10 G 3, f. 9a: "the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsīya to our Master Shabīb, learned in the Torah", etc., "son of our Master Jacob, many greetings", etc., "and to all our scholars in Qayrawān". Cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 444-448, 457f. and Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 9f., 32; in both places there is mention of the fragment from the additions to the "Arūkh, of Ibn Jāmi", published by Buber, *Grätz Jub. Vol.*, 17, where there is the mention of the responsum of Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi; see Abramson, *ʿInyānōt*, 36ff. The grudge of Naḥshōn Gaon: *supra*, sec. 100. Hayy b. Naḥshōn, see 44. Samuel b. Hophni: 52, 53, and see especially, 52, II, a, lines 12-13, 15-16. In 52 I there is a complaint about the interruption in dispatches of money from the locality of the addressee (probably Qayrawān), "during many years". There the Gaon insists that the monies are destined for the scholars, not for any person in particular. Dōsā: Wertheimer, *Qehillat sh.*, 72, in a list of geonic responsa. Money for Dōsā: 198, lines 29-30; the sons of Berekhiah inquiring about him: 146, a, lines 6, 14. Israel ha-Kohen: TS Box H 11, f. 1, ed. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 415f., cf. *idem*, *Texts*, I, 153. The letter of Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī: 58; cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 186 and n. 64. Nahum might perhaps have settled in Qayrawān, not returning to Baghdad. His sons and grandsons settled in Egypt, Palestine, and Tyre, and we shall meet them *infra*, in the part on the economy. See also Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 58, 69, where there is mention of letters from Nahum al-Baradānī, the cantor, and of a query of his, in a list of queries addressed to Samuel b. Hophni. In a poem written by Abraham ha-Kohen about Abraham 'Rabbēnū', who is the benefactor of Baghdad Jews and helped to restore the Sura yeshiva: TS 8 J 1, printed by Schechter, *Saadyana*, 66-74, there is mention of a synagogue that belonged to that Abraham 'Rabbēnū', in which Nahum al-Baradānī was the cantor; below I shall deal with that poem and the possible identity of the object of his praises, Abraham, but I can note in advance, that the location of that Abraham and his synagogue was Qayrawān, which was also the location of Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī's cantorship. See also Mann, *JQR*, NS 9 (1918/19), 150-155, and *Texts*, I, 151f. In that poem the three sons of Nahum are mentioned: Bārūkh, Yannai, and Solomon. On the family's father, Joseph b. Nahum, see also: Fleischer, *Habermann Mem. Vol.*, 250ff.; *idem*, *Ha-yōšerōt*, 375; *idem*, *Lešonenu*, 48-49 (1984/85), 150. In the Geniza fragment TS NS 150.249, containing notes which a cantor wrote for himself, we find: "the *qerōvā* (a *piyyūt* recited in the main prayer) of al-Baradānī, who composed it, which I shall recite, 'the Spirit of the Lord spake by me'", etc. [2 Sam. 23:2]; i.e., he intended to recite it before the public. See on the *payṭān* Joseph b. Nahum al-Baradānī and his family: Beeri, *Ha-ḥazzān*, 1-11.

sonalities the gaon mentions Bahlūl the *rav* b. Joseph who had sent to the yeshiva two letters with queries, a number of years earlier, the responsa having been sent to the yeshiva via Fustat, by Shemariah b. Elḥanan. However, no confirmation of arrival was received from Qayrawān about one of the queries, and the gaon assumes that the blame lies with Shemariah b. Elḥanan, about whom it was heard that he no longer was an adherent of the Babylonian yeshivot, but of that of Palestine.¹²⁰

(121) Nahum al-Baradānī, who as we have seen above was in contact with Sherira Gaon, maintained this contact in the days of Hayy Gaon, as well. In the same letter where we find the issue relating to Bahlūl, we also see that the gaon asks about "Nahum b. Joseph the Great Cantor may his repose be in Paradise". There are also florid statements of friendship in it. According to the gaon, he is "the foremost of all cantors in Babylonia, and his son leads the prayers in the great synagogue in Baghdad", etc. Hayy Gaon is truly generous in his praise for Nahum, and as we have seen Nahum was also in contact with Samuel Gaon b. Hophni. Though it seems as if Nahum's main activities were being a cantor and liturgical poet, these were only his avocations, he was actually a wealthy merchant. I have already mentioned his houses in Baghdad and, as we shall see, his progeny were involved with the great merchants of the Mediterranean area in the eleventh century.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Isaac Ṣemah b. Palṭoi, Aaron b. Sarjāda, see Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 180f.; Sherira's public letters to Qayrawān: 20, lines 14-15. See a summary of the queries and responsa links between Sherira and Qayrawān, in Poznanski, *ibid.*, 181. Hayy Gaon's letter to the *aluf*: 37; see on the matter of Shemariah and Bahlūl: Mann, *Texts*, I, 109f.; *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/34), 295f., n. 181. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 83. Mann and Abramson understood the matter differently, that it is Bahlūl who joined the Palestinian yeshiva, see Gil, *Hist.*, 575f. and note 68. Mann assumed that Bahlūl received the title *ḥāver*, of the Palestinian yeshiva, and it is therefore that he is called *sanhedrā rabbā*, in the quire of responsa addressed to his son, Ṣalah, see Harkavy, *Resp.*, 24 and see Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/34), 295f.; however, this is not a proof, *sanhedrā rabbā* being a much used florid title. Both Mann and Abramson noted the fact that Bahlūl continued to receive responsa from Hayy Gaon, and see the responsa of Hayy Gaon to Bahlūl, mentioned in TS 16.19 (a list of books), in Assaf, *Kiryat sefer*, 18 (1939-1942), 278, no. 21, and his remarks *ibid.*, n. 16; Mann, *Texts*, 110 n. 3. See also the beginning of a responsum to Bahlūl b. Joseph, TS Loan 90, in: Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 59 and his comments *ibid.*, 54. Bahlūl is a frequently used name in the Aramaic speaking population, such as Bahlūl the father of Ḥasan, who was the author of the Syriac dictionary edited by Brockelmann, cf. Ortiz de Urbina, *Patr. Syr.*, 205; Krämer, *Humanism*, 17, assumed that the meaning of the name is 'a jester'. A person named Isaac b. Bahlūl is mentioned in my collection, see Gil, *De-malkhūt*, IV, in the Index.

¹²¹ Al-Baradānī: 37, lines 56ff.; cf. Mann, *Texts*, 113, 122 n. 8a; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 91, assumed that "the *muqaddam* over all cantors" meant the most notable among them, not like Mann, *Texts* (above), who interpreted it as: the head of the cantors; however, it is difficult to guess what exactly did the gaon mean; he might have used *muqaddam* in its usual meaning in Arabic, 'the appointee' (over the cantors). Anyway, Nahum did not return to Baghdad, but settled in Qayrawān. Possibly his son mentioned by the Gaon is identical with Abū Maṣṣūr about whose matter Nahum addressed his petition to the gaon of Sura, Samuel b. Hophni (above, sec. 119). Abramson further (*ibid.*, n. 29) assumed that there is no identity between Nahum b. Joseph who wrote 58, and Nahum b. Joseph, the *payṭān* and cantor, mentioned by Hayy Gaon in his above-mentioned letter, 37, arguing that the first was written by 'a pupil' of Samuel b. Hophni; but this seems somewhat far-fetched, as both letters refer to somebody living in Qayrawān; indeed, we have more information on that family's, the Baradānīs', migration to the Maghrib, and their settling there. Why would not Hayy Gaon have written laudatory statements and inquire about a person who wrote a letter to Samuel Gaon, as peace was concluded between the two geonim? Abramson has more references to

(122) On the other hand, there were a number of men in Qayrawān who turned the city into a center of learning. This center was mainly dependent on Babylonia, where they referred their queries and even awaited their tracts of responsa and halachic texts and commentaries. Just as we have seen that Nahum al-Baradānī settled there, Qayrawān also became the home of one of the great halachic scholars of the time, Ḥushiel b. Elḥanan. According to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Tradition*, Ḥushiel was one of the four famous captives in the story told there. The captives, scholars who had sailed from Bari to Safāqūṣ (in the preserved version of the *Book of Tradition*: SFSTYN, obviously a corruption, about which there were various speculations; I believe my assumption is the most probable), for *hakhnāsāt kallā*, generally meaning: help for a girl to be married, but has already been interpreted as a conference, the common meaning at the time for *kallā*. A glance at the map shows that Safāqūṣ is relatively close to Italy. Their ship was seized by Ibn Rumāḥiṣ (the correct spelling), commander of the fleet of the Umayyad Spanish caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III. Shemariah b. Elḥanan, one of the four captives, was sold (i.e., redeemed) in Alexandria and, as we have seen, settled in Egypt. Moses, and his son Ḥanōkh, still a boy, were redeemed in Cordova and settled in Spain. As for Ḥushiel, he was redeemed in "Ifriqiya on the seacoast", apparently Mahdiyya was meant, wherefrom he went to Qayrawān, "the most prominent of the all three cities of Ishmael in the west". His son Ḥananel was born there, and Ḥushiel "became the leader".

If these events indeed occurred in the rule of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III (912-961), then Ḥushiel's arrival in Qayrawān took place about 960. There is information from 946, about special activities of the fleet under the command of Ibn Rumāḥiṣ when he prepared to launch an attack on the Fatimids in Ifriqiya, a plan not carried out. There is also information about intensive activities of the fleet at the time of Hishām II, about 977, when a naval battle flared between this fleet and that of the Fatimids. However, we will not be far from the truth when assuming, as stated, that the captives' seizure took place about 960, towards the end of the life of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III. I differ on this point from other students who sought by different ways to correct the *Book of Tradition* account, especially because of the evident contradiction between this and Ḥushiel's letter to Shemariah b. Elḥanan, that has been preserved in the Geniza, and other contradictions, foremost the date noted by Abraham Ibn Da'ūd himself: "During R. Sherira's time, around the year 4750, somewhat earlier or later", i.e., around 989/990 (it should be noted that Abraham Ibn Da'ūd uses a round number, 4750). This, of course, is evidently in contradiction with what he had previously written about ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III and Ibn Rumāḥiṣ (known to us in the Arabic sources, and it seems that his flourishing ended with his death sometime in the seventies of that century after having been poisoned, probably in 980). However, Abraham Ibn Da'ūd means this date, 4750, not as that of the captives' seizure but as that of what happened to Moses, Ḥanōkh's father, and how the Cordova congregation appointed him judge, and there is no contradiction. G. Cohen, in his article on this story of the four captives in

the many *piyyūṭim* of Nahum al-Baradānī, and see also Scheiber, *AO* (Hung.), 30 (1976), 342f., and his references *ibid.*, nn. 10-12.

Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's book, totally negated its historical value, saying that it was actually a typological reconstruction built on talmudic motifs and a construct set on symmetrical numbers that Abraham Ibn Da'ūd ascribed to the great events in Jewish history. Thus, for example, if we turn the 4750—that is 'approximately' according to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd—to 4749, we arrive at a time of 980 years after Hillel the Elder became *nāsī* of the court. 980 is the double of 490 (a symmetrical number, 7×70). However, there is nothing in these arguments that contradicts the historical core of the story, namely, that Shemariah b. Elḥanan, Moses the father of Ḥanōkh and his son Ḥanōkh, and Hushiel b. Elḥanan, had indeed set sail from Italy to a conference in the Maghrib, were taken captive en route, and subsequently each one reached a different place—Egypt, Spain and the Maghrib. Abraham Ibn Da'ūd had indeed embellished the story with various typological motifs, he may even have toyed with the date in order to attune it to his outlook, yet all this does not suffice to negate the story itself.

Hushiel's letter to Shemariah b. Elḥanan was also, as stated above, considered to be totally contradictory to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's story, firstly because of the mention of Elḥanan b. Hushiel (he even wrote his name in acrostic with metaphorical flourishes in the letter's introduction), while Abraham Ibn Da'ūd writes about Ḥananel b. Hushiel, but Hushiel does not mention Ḥananel in his letter, even where we would expect him to be mentioned: "...greetings from us and from Master Elḥanan our son, and from the others accompanying us", etc. Yet this lack of mention can be explained in various ways, for me the most likely being that Ḥananel was absent from Qayrawān for a prolonged period and thus was not near his father when the letter was written. In fact, his son Elḥanan, as well, so writes Hushiel, was far away from him for a time, and for this reason Hushiel could not leave for Egypt because he awaited his return. One may even raise a more far fetched assumption, that the letter was written before Ḥananel was born, for we do not know the year of his birth, nor the year that Hushiel wrote his letter, only that it must have been written before the end of December 1011, the time of Shemariah b. Elḥanan's demise. Afterwards, of course, Ḥananel won renown, whereas about Elḥanan we know very little even though he is mentioned a number of times in Geniza documents: in the copy of a deed signed by him, drawn up in Qayrawān in 1032; in a query addressed to him and also in his responsum, where the questioners refer to him as "head of the Court and head of *bē rabbānān*" (the institution of learning and local court in Qayrawān); also in a letter from the Palermo congregation to the congregations of Qayrawān and Mahdiyya, where Elḥanan b. Hushiel is referred to as *bēt dīn* (i.e., the chief judge of the court). Mann went so far as to conjecture that there were two Hushiels, the one the father of Ḥananel and the other the father of Elḥanan. There were others who assumed that Ḥananel and Elḥanan were one and the same, or perhaps there was a change of name and the like. However, the most reasonable assumption is that Hushiel had two sons, the older and less famous being Elḥanan, who apparently died in the 1030s, and the younger, and famous, *rabbēnū* Ḥananel, whom Abraham Ibn Da'ūd mentions to make his readers know who Hushiel was. This simple possibility, that Hushiel had two sons, Elḥanan and Ḥananel, was dismissed by Mann, reasoning that Samuel b. Naghrila, the Spanish nagid, does not mention Elḥanan in the letter of con-

solation that he sent to Ḥananel after Ḥushiel's demise, whereas he addresses Ḥananel, to whom he refers by name and praises. There could have been all kinds of reasons for the absence of a mention of his brother Elḥanan. There were even contentions that Abraham Ibn Da'ūd presents Ḥushiel's arrival at Qayrawān as the result of coercion, after he was captured, yet Ḥushiel himself, in his letter to Shemariah b. Elḥanan, states that he arrived of his own free will from Christian lands to a Muslim country, in order to be able to visit Shemariah. On this he states, as he has already written in three of four of his previous letters: "That our departure from the land of our birth to go and live in the land of Ishmael was only for the purpose of encountering the face of the Master for whom I had been previously yearning for years, and we have still not succeeded in doing so", etc. Obviously, there is no contradiction with the core of Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's story of the captives, if we assume the letter was written about AD 1000—40 years having elapsed since the act of capture. We may assume that after the Maghribis had redeemed him, Ḥushiel returned to his native land, southern Italy (from whence he had sailed, from Bari, then the center of Byzantine rule in Italy), and that many years later he embarked upon a journey to the Muslim lands; it may be that his visit to Qayrawān, intended to be of short duration, led him to set down stakes until the end of his days.

Ḥushiel came from an area that had always preferred the yeshiva of Palestine, and where the inhabitants had observed the Palestinian customs, not those of Babylonia. He had now come to a place where the Palestinian customs certainly prevailed, and at the time of his second arrival, as a free man, they had been strengthened to a certain extent by virtue of the common political framework created by the Fatimid takeover of Egypt and of Palestine. Ḥushiel's name was certainly widely known, both because of his learning and for being an erudite and knowledgeable representative of the best of the Palestinian tradition. When Samuel b. Naghrila, the nagid, states that Ḥushiel "was famous in Raqat" (i.e., Tiberias, that symbolized the Palestinian yeshiva), it certainly had a strong basis. Not for naught did Nathan b. Abraham, scion of one of Palestinian geonic families (on his mother's side) leave Palestine for Qayrawān while still a lad to study with Ḥushiel some time in the first decade of the eleventh century. He undoubtedly learned important matters of wisdom from him, and some of this may be embedded in a Mishnā commentary attributed to him. It is stated in the Bustanai story attributed to Nathan b. Abraham, that Nathan learned matters from sources of his geonic antecedents, but also from his teacher Ḥushiel, the gist of which is criticism of the Babylonian exilarchic dynasty. As we have seen above, this criticism was an extreme extension of attitudes taken by the family of Sherira and Hayy, as shown in the responsum written by one of them, where the story of Bustanai and his sons from the Persian wife serves as example and precedent. Moreover, it appears that Nathan b. Abraham received from Ḥushiel the ideological basis and incentive to return to Palestine and lead the struggle against the priestly family that had taken over the yeshiva (the head of the yeshiva, Solomon b. Judah, was an in-law of this family). It is probable that at the outset of his journey and struggle he received the support of Hayy Gaon, then nearing the end of his days, because Hayy himself was displeased by that priestly family. Here we will add Shemariah b. Elḥanan's action of patronage for Nathan b. Abra-

ham when starting out under his aegis, at the request of Samuel 'the third' b. Hoshana, and it was Shemariah who referred him to Hushiel, his old friend. Many important details, of course, to understand the 'ideological' stand of this camp are missing, but it seems that the general picture is as follows: a triumvirate of personages—Hayy Gaon, Shemariah b. Elhanan and Hushiel b. Elhanan—sought to bring about a change in the contemporary Jewish world, and for that purpose replace the leadership of the Palestinian yeshiva. They laid the assignment upon the young shoulders of Nathan b. Abraham, who in the end, as is known, failed in his task.

The ties between Hayy Gaon and Hushiel did not begin before the summer of 1006, for, as we find, it was then that the gaon, writing to an anonymous *alūf* in Qayrawān—Jacob b. Nissim, apparently—states among other things that a rumor had reached the yeshiva about "a man great in wisdom, a mountain of Torah, well-versed in *halākhā*, whose name is our Lord and Master Hushiel son of our Lord and Master Elhanan, may his Creator protect him, and we were wondering, how could he refrain from sending his inquiries to the yeshiva so that they participate in their fine details" etc. The gaon was interested in "his marvelous queries to be discussed by the scholars of the yeshiva", etc. Then the ties became tighter. It should be recalled that a large and important group of wealthy merchants of Babylonian origin (whom we shall meet in the economics sections, beginning with sec. 376, below) had settled in Qayrawān. They had great standing and influence in the community. Hushiel's move to Qayrawān thus co-opted him to the Babylonian area of influence. As was written, he found "favor in their eyes and in the eyes of the kingdom". In fact, his letter lists some of the important personages in this group: Judah *rēsh kallā* (b. Joseph), Joseph b. Berekhiah, Abraham b. Nathan (i.e., b. 'Aṭā, the nagid), and further down: "the sons of our Master Joseph and our Master Nissim", apparently: Joseph (whom he had already mentioned) and Nissim, the sons of Berekhiah. This group adopted him and granted him, or obtained for him from Hayy Gaon, the title of *rēsh bē rabbānān*, head of the local scholars. Moreover, it may be assumed that Hushiel was the leader of the scholars who had emigrated to the Maghrib from the Christian areas under Byzantine control. In a query presented to Hayy Gaon in the matter of blowing the *shofar*, the Qayrawānites note that Jacob b. Nissim dealt with this issue with the "scholars of Edom", living in Qayrawān, which happened, they write, in 1309 Sel., AD 998. This is evidence regarding the standing of these scholars, certainly of Hushiel's group. They were 'Palestinians' by tradition and custom, in contrast to the 'Babylonians' in Qayrawān. Here, in Qayrawān, a kind of blending took place between the traditions of Babylonia and those of Palestine.¹²²

¹²² The four captives and the matter of Hushiel: Ibn Da'ūd, the *Book of Tradition*, 46f., and see the English translation *ibid.*, and the editor's notes, pp. 63, 77, 133-135. See Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 192-194; see on Hushiel also Hirschberg, *Hist.*, I, 317-322, and more references there. On 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn al-Rumāḥis see Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima*, II, 35; on Ibn Rumāḥis' plan to attack the Fatimids, see Idris, *Berberie*, I, 22. On the maritime battle in 977 see Lévi-Provençal, *L'Espagne mus. au X^e s.*, 152f., and *ibid.*, 155, n. 2: 'Abdallah ibn Rayyāḥin in Ibn 'Idhārī, in his first edition, II, 261, is but a garble of 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Rumāḥis; see the 2nd edition of Ibn 'Idhārī, II, 245. The assassination of Ibn Rumāḥis: Lévi-Provençal, *Hist.*, II, 262, cf. Lombard, *Le navire*, 58. The date given by Ibn Da'ūd: *The Book of Tradition*, 48. See the comprehensive article of Cohen, *PAAJR*, 29:55,

(123) Ḥananel b. Ḥushiel developed that same dualism evident in his father who, as we saw, brought the Palestinian tradition to the Maghrib and certainly also absorbed the learning of the Babylonian geonim, especially those of Pumbedita, Sherira and Hayy. Ḥananel brought this dual facet to fruition in his commentaries to the three talmudic orders, *Mō'ēd*, *Nāshīm*, and *Neziqīn*, and the tractates of *Berākhōt*, *Hullīn*, *Bekhōrōt* and *Niddā*. He was the first to write a genuine commentary on the Talmud without just sufficing with an explanation of the words, and basing on both the Babylonian geonim and the Palestinian Talmud. There is some biographical data on him in the *Book of Tradition*. According to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, he be-

1960/61, with a profound analysis of the story and a discussion of its historical veracity, and also references to earlier studies. On the subject of the date see *ibid.*, 72, and there also the matter of the letter to Shemariah b. Elhanan. A proof that Hushiel was indeed from Bari is extant also in the affair of the appeal organized, in ca. 1030, by his son Ḥananel, on behalf of their relative from Bari, who was in distress and came to ask for help in Qayrawān, see 125. Ḥushiel's letter: TS 28.1, ed. Schechter, *JQR*, 11 (1899), 647ff. See especially the discussion in Mann, *JQR*, NS 9 (1918/19), 160-171; 11 (1920/21), 451; *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1932/33), 286-301; see there also more references. See the deed from Qayrawān, whose original was written on 14 March 1032, and was copied two years later, in 1034, in Fustat: 143, b, lines 4-6. The query and responsum of Elhanan b. Ḥushiel: TS 12.194; the letter from Sicily: 235. Solomon ibn Gabirol mentions Elhanan in one of his poems, ed. Yarden, no. 50, pp. 103f., probably dedicated to Nissim b. Jacob: "and many greetings to Elhanan your pupil and to Jacob (who is Jacob b. 'Amram, the nagid), your prince"; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 9 (1918/19), 163. See the condolence letter of the nagid Samuel, ed. Kaufmann, from a manuscript owned by J. Reifmann, *Ōsar* 10v, 1878/79, 64ff., and see there p. 65, line 19, about Ḥushiel, who is "great in Ifriqiya and renowned in Raqaṭ" (=Tiberias); also *ibid.*, p. 68, line 22: "you deserted your city and you came and erected yeshivot in Ifriqiya". In the English version of this discussion, Gil, *PAJR*, 57 (1990/91), 93, I assumed that Elhanan might have died before his father Ḥushiel, but I now see that this is impossible, as in 236, a, line 7, there is mention of Elhanan b. Ḥushiel, whereas the blessing for the dead is added to Ḥushiel's name; so also in TS 12.194. See also: Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1962), 22; Abramson, *Sinai*, 60 (1966/67), 149f., has a summary of opinions in research, about Elhanan b. Ḥushiel (where the dates of Ḥushiel's death and of the deed signed by Elhanan are incorrect, probably a result of memory lapse); Abramson edited there two responsa of Elhanan, from the Geniza; one is the above-mentioned TS 12.194, and the other: TS NS 309.105. On the status of south-Italy under the emperor John Tzimiscēs (969-976) see Vasiliev, *Hist.*, 328. See also Sharf, *Byz. Jewry*, 167; Starr, *Jews*, 165, also places the story of the four captives in the framework of Byzantine Jews' history. Nathan b. Abraham's stay with Ḥushiel, see Gil, *Hist.*, 629f.; on the Mishnā commentary, *ibid.*, 719; the Bustanai story: 2, ix. See on the conflict in the Palestinian yeshiva: Gil, *ibid.*, 694ff.; on Hayy Gaon and the priestly Palestinian geonim, see: Ben-Sasson, *Zion*, 51 (1985/86), 396-404; Samuel b. Hoshaf'na and Shemariah b. Elhanan, and their support for Nathan: Gil, *ibid.*, 692f. The letter of Hayy Gaon: 37. See more on the matter of Ḥushiel: Aptowitz, *HUCA*, 8-9 (1931/32), 437, where he reflects on an identity between Elhanan and Hananel, and the possibility of a name change due to an illness; and see his discussion of 37, in: Vienna, *Jahresbericht*, 37-39 (1933), 9f.; from the passage of the nagid Samuel "renowned in Raqaṭ" (above in this note) he concludes that it is Ḥushiel who spread the knowledge of the Palestinian Talmud in the Maghrib; he has there an impossible conjecture, based on what is said in Ha-Meiri, that Ḥushiel came to the Maghrib from Spain (Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 225: "and after him was R. Ḥananel, whose father was R. Ḥushiel, who came from Spain [*Sefārad*]"; that one has to read *SRD*, i.e. Sardinia (instead of *SFRD*, Sefārad); there he also tried to ascribe the criticism of Hayy Gaon about "those who came from Rome" (another reading: from Edom), in his responsum to Qayrawān about the *shofar* blowing (see *Ōsar ha-g. to Rōsh ha-shānā*, 63 and see *ibid.*, note a), to Ḥushiel; this was already rejected by Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1932/33), 295. On the link between Ḥushiel and Palestine, see also Ben-Sasson, *Shalem*, 5 (1986/87), 47f. See also a brief comment on Ḥushiel, in Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 83f. *Rēsh bē rabbānān*, see: 2, ix; and also: Abramson, *Nissim Gaon*, 13.

came very wealthy from merchants' deposits and had nine daughters. However, there is nothing there about the subject with which we are dealing—Qayrawān's ties with Babylonia. There is no doubt that Ḥananel was in contact with Hayy Gaon, and apparently spent a considerable time with him. He mentions him in the commentaries that he began writing while the gaon was still alive. Some examples are in the commentary to the tractate *Shabbāt* page 115a, "and we have seen that this was commented by our Master Hayy Gaon, the lamp of Israel, may he live and flourish forever"; or he adds a blessing (*ibid.* page 120b): "and we have heard that the gaon, may God guard him, has said", etc.

There is evidence of Ḥananel's involvement and status among that group of 'Babylonian' Maghribis that led public Jewish community life in Qayrawān, in the letter of Isma'īl (Samuel) b. Barhūn (Abraham) al-Tāhīrtī, to Ephraim b. Shemariah. According to the writer, he had received a letter from the head of the yeshiva. Since Ephraim b. Shemariah was the Fustat representative of the Palestinian yeshiva, it may be assumed that the said head was the Palestinian gaon, Solomon b. Judah. Though the purpose of the letter is not stated, it is clear from the continuation that it dealt with an urgent call for financial assistance. Therefore, the writer turned to the nagid (Abraham b. 'Aṭā') to arrange an appeal for donations. Ḥananel was present at the meeting, and he took the letter of the yeshiva head from Isma'īl and left the nagid only with the letter written to him by Ḥananel about an appeal to benefit a relative of his in the land of Rūm i.e., southern Italy. Thus instead of a collection for the Palestinian yeshiva, a fund drive was held for the relative, who had come to Qayrawān, and a large sum of money was collected. That was in vain, for the relative was murdered by robbers when on his way home from Salerno (on the west coast) to Bari (on the east coast) where he was journeying by land. After that incident involving the nagid, Ḥananel, and the appeal, Isma'īl b. Barhūn received (after a delay) other letters from the head of the yeshiva. He expresses sorrow for the letters' delay, but does not state what he wishes to do.¹²³

¹²³ See Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 194-198. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 58; 125, Isma'īl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī's letter. There is also mention in it of the acquisition of quires from the bequest of Elhanan, possibly Elhanan b. Hushiel being meant, not b. Shemariah, who died in about 1026, see Gil, *Hist.*, 581. See another opinion, different from mine, about 125, in Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 455; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 117; Goitein, *Finkel Jub. Vol.*, 130f.; see also TS Box K 3, f. 1, where the commentaries of R. Ḥananel to *Mo'ed*, *Nāshim*, and *Neziqin* are mentioned, which is still no proof that he only wrote commentaries to these three orders. Cf. Assaf, *Kiryat sefer*, 18 (1940/41), 61ff. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 563 n. 24, deduces from what Abū Da'ūd wrote in the *Book of Trad.*, that the merchants made him a partner to their profits; he also assumed that the main links of R. Ḥananel were with Christian Europe, basing on the paucity of his mentions in the Geniza. On Ḥananel's central position in the communities of Qayrawān and Mahdiyya, there is also proof in what Yahyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī wrote in 627, a, line 17, that any document of importance is to be deposited with Ḥananel. The exact date of Ḥananel's demise is not known; he was still alive in 1053, as he wrote in his commentary to *'Avōdā zārā* 9a: "like this year of ours which is 4813 from the world's creation; if you deduct from it 3449 (as it should be read), the remainder is 1364 (as it should be read) from the kingdom of the Greeks"; cf. Berliner, *Migdal Chan.*, VIII; Mann, *Texts*, I, 246 n. 15. 613 contains information about a letter of condolence sent by the head of the yeshiva to the community of Qayrawān, on the demise of Ḥananel and the appointment of Nissim b. Jacob as *rēsh bē rabbanān* and chief judge in the entire Maghrib. This letter was written in the summer of 1056, wherefrom we may deduce that Ḥananel died in 1055, or the beginning of 1056; in that same letter "Joseph, son of the

(124) Jacob b. Nissim and his son Nissim after him, were stalwart supporters of the Babylonian yeshivot, especially Pumbedita. It was to Jacob b. Nissim b. Shāhūn that Sherira Gaon addressed his famous *Letter*, in 987. There is no doubt that the gaon truly held him in high esteem, as we see in the following: "Since you are a *talmīd* and *hāvēr* of ours and a high mountain of Torah, we are displaying our heart's feelings to you". Jacob was the founder and head of the *bēt midrāsh* in Qayrawān. "A query sent by Joseph b. Berekhiah and the scholars from the *bēt midrāsh* of Jacob *rōsh kallā* son of our Master Nissim" was discussed at "the Adar *kallā* of the year 1332" (1011), more than four years after the death of Jacob b. Nissim. Also: "These queries submitted by our Lord and Master Jacob *he-hāvēr* son of our Lord and Master Nissim, and the *talmīdīm* (at his *bēt midrāsh*?) went forth from us to the Gate of the yeshiva of the Diaspora's great court of our Master Sherira head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our Master Hananiah head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our Master Judah head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* and the great court (of our Master Hayy) head of the court of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our Master Sherira head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*". And further: "A query submitted by the Excellent Elder our Lord and Master Jacob *ha-rav ha-rōsh*, Head of the yeshiva of blessed memory" (the writer is Hayy Gaon, and he means Jacob b. Nissim's query to his father Sherira). Sherira and Hayy together send him their commentaries and in their letter ask that he copy and distribute them, to

nagid, of blessed memory of a righteous" i.e., the Spanish nagid, is mentioned, and it is therein mention of Joseph's outstanding status and his might, *ibid. b*, line 7; wherefrom it is obvious that the time is after the death of the nagid Samuel; according to the *Book of Trad.*, 56, Samuel died in AM 4815, i.e. 1055 (there is no need to correct it into 4816 as maintained by David Sassoon basing on a manuscript of the nagid's *dīwān* owned by him; see Mann, *Texts*, I, 204 and n. 5), as confirmed by this letter as well. One needs to correct the accepted view, based on the *Yūhasīm*, that Hananel died in AM 4810 (1050), see Rapoport, *Tōledōi*, II, 12, 14 n. 1. ULC Or 1080 J 7, from a community quire in Fustat, contains (*recto*, bottom) a testimony in the hand of Ephraim b. Shemariah, of Sunday, 23 Shevat, Sel. 1351, 10 February 1040, about "Surūra, daughter of Solomon the elder the physician b. Rabi^c", wife of "Isaac, known as Surtūr b. Jacob b. Aaron, known as al-Jāsūs". Her husband owes her "in the city of Qayrawān an upper storey in the great compound bequeathed to me and my brother and my sister Zayna, which was bought by a deed in the house of his great honorable sanctity, our Lord and Master Hananel, the head *rav*, son of his honorable great sanctity.... Hushiel, the head *rav*, may he rest in Eden, which is the compound under guard in *bāb* (the gate) Abū'l-Rabi^c"; thus we have been informed about a compound of Hananel in Qayrawān; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 563 n. 24. Isaac, the husband of the above-mentioned Surūra, was the brother-in-law of Jacob b. Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi^c of Qābis, brother of his wife Yamāma, see her mentioned in 143, *a*, lines 13-14; the grandfather's name is there Aaron (Hārūn) b. al-Jāsūs al-Masīlī, showing that they came from Masīla. In a letter of Nehorai b. Nissim's relative, Nathan b. Nehorai, from Alexandria, to Nehorai, written in about 1062, there is mention of the demise of Abraham b. Jacob, the son of the *dayyān*'s sister (apparently from Mahdiyya), and we are told that he was the one in whose keeping were "the books and the letters which belonged to R. Nissim, of blessed memory, to R. Hananel, of blessed memory, and R. Berekhiah, of blessed memory"; see 422, *b*, line 6. See the discussion on the biography of Hananel also in Naḥalon, *Shenātōn*, 11-12 (1983/1986), 1-6. Grossman, *Zion*, 50 (1985), 216, writes about the case of a father and his son in a leadership position, such as Hushiel and Hananel; one should not look, in this matter, for continuity, since Hananel only fathered daughters. See also Abramson, *Sinai*, 23:57, 1947/48, who writes, on margin of R. Hananel's commentary to *Bāvā batrā*, ch. ii, about the considerable number of citations from Sherira and Hayy in Hananel's commentaries, and how in his turn, he influenced the author of the *ʿArūkh*; see *ibid.* also references to additional published fragments of the commentary.

Sijlmāssa, for example. They also ask him to crown his letters in a manner that arouses reverence: "Jacob b. Nissim, *rōsh kallā*, *alūf* of the *dārā rabbā* ('the great row' of the yeshiva); to all our brethren of (the nation of) Israel in such-and-such a place", etc. This was certainly a kind of encouragement and support to his recognition as leader of the Jewish communities in the Maghrib. Jacob b. Nissim's standing in the Maghrib communities is also demonstrated in his letter to *talmīdīm* in Qābis, that I have already mentioned above. This letter, which is in an inferior state of preservation, deals with the queries they sent to Jacob b. Nissim in Qayrawān to be forwarded to Jacob b. 'Awkal "treasurer of the yeshiva" in Fustat for forwarding to Sherira Gaon and his son Hayy, the chief judge. The quire of queries arrived shortly before the Sabbath, and the leader of the caravan was rushing to leave on his way to Egypt. Thus Jacob b. Nissim had no time to examine the queries for corrections before passing them. The people of Qābis are admonished not to repeat this in the future, rather to send their queries earlier before the departure of the caravans of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca (via Egypt). Jacob is clearly certain of his prestige and status among the Jews of Qābis.

Sherira and Hayy, as noted, mention in their letter to Jacob Ibn 'Awkal (above, sec. 113), Sherira's responsa on the queries of Jacob b. Nissim, and a treatise he composed especially for him. According to Mann, the responsa mentioned in the letter refer to Sherira Gaon's famous *Letter*. It appears that Jacob b. Nissim's demise, at about the end of 1006, left the yeshiva in a state of bewilderment now that it was bereft of such a suitable and enlightened supporter, to the extent that Hayy Gaon, after learning of Jacob b. Nissim's demise from a letter sent by Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, sent a letter to Fās on 9 February 1007, inquiring whether there was someone who could be relied upon in Qayrawān. Hayy Gaon adds that he had eulogized Jacob b. Nissim with a great crowd present at the yeshiva, and the entire audience bemoaned his death.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ See on Jacob b. Nissim and his son Nissim: Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 204-207, 211-218, with details on their writings. The name of Jacob's grandfather, Shāhūn, is a Persian one, and points with certainty to an eastern origin of the family. The Arabic pattern of the name is always with an *ī*, Shāhīn, see, e.g. Sibṭ, *Mir'āh*, MS Paris 5866, 97a: Abū'l-Faraj b. 'Imrān b. Shāhīn. In the letter of Peraḥiah b. Sahlān to Nehorai b. Nissim (ca. 1055) we find, in clear script, Ibn Shāhūn, see 779, a, line 8. See the article of Vajda, *REJ*, 107:99, 1946/7, who denies the view that it is Jacob b. Nissim who wrote the commentary to *Sefer yešārā*; its author was Isaac Israeli, and it was completed by Dūnash b. Tamīm. Sherira's statement: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 132 (no. 257); cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 438; the query of Joseph b. Berekhiah: Harkavy, *ibid.*, 76 (no. 76); Ashkenazi, *Tā'am zeqenīm*, 54f.; the responsum deals with miracles and prodigies. The queries of Jacob's *bēt midrašh*, see the Geniza fragment: JNUL 4°577.7/2; similar texts may be found also in the *'Arūkh* s.v. Abayē, at the beginning; cf. Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, 79f. "The excellent elder": *Sha'arē Šedeq*, 94b; see far-fetched praises and pomposities about Jacob also in the preserved preamble to the *Letter* to Sherira: 31; among others: "the greatest of our sanhendrin, the mightiest of our *rāshē kallā*". Sherira and Hayy: 32. See also: TS Loan 104: "queries of Master Jacob, son of our Lord and Master Nissim, to our Lord Sherira and Hayy, the chief judge, of blessed memory"; TS 8 G 7, f. 3: "the responsum of our Lord Sherira Gaon and his son Hayy, of blessed memory, as they responded to Master Jacob b. Nissim of Qayrawān in the year 1302" (AD 991), printed by Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 127; the letter of Jacob b. Nissim to the community of Qābis: 36, cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 100ff.; the letter to Ibn 'Awkal: 33, a, from line 12; 37, written by Hayy Gaon to an *alūf* in Qayrawān, on 11 August 1006, destined to Jacob b. Nissim, not to Judah b. Joseph, as assumed by Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 77ff., who gives

(125) Nissim b. Jacob, or *rabbēnū* Nissim, continued in his father's footsteps by maintaining the staunch ties with Pumbedita. However, it was during his time that Hayy died and the relative decline of Babylonia as the fountainhead of the diasporas began. Thus along with Ḥananel b. Hushiel, Nissim b. Jacob was among the first pillars of the Maghrib center at this time, while Babylonia's authority was not what it had once been.

Nissim undoubtedly was a disciple of Hayy's and deeply influenced by him, and even though it is claimed (for lack of evidence) that he did not personally study under him, he was certainly influenced by the letters and responsa to the queries submitted by the people of Qayrawān to the gaon; such as: "our Master Hayy Gaon of blessed memory sent a responsum to our Master Nissim's *bēt midrāsh* in the language of the Hagarites", i.e., in Arabic, and they had a *shuvtā de-riglā*, on the Sabbath of *lēkh lekḥā* ("get thee out", Gen. 12:1; in the month of Marheshwan), according to the well-known Babylonian custom that I have mentioned above.

Abraham Ibn Da'ūd also records the special ties between Nissim b. Jacob and Hayy Gaon, in his *Book of Tradition*. After Ḥushiel's demise, he writes, his son and his students, i.e., Ḥananel and Nissim, were ordained in Qayrawān. "Our Master Nissim received much from our Master Hayy who loved him very much and used to send him books containing answers to all of his doubts". Nissim is even referred to as *rēsh bē-rabbānān* and also *alūf*, titles apparently granted by Hayy Gaon. Samuel, the Spanish nagid, in one of his poems, also clearly shows Nissim's special ties with Babylonia.

Concrete confirmation of the close ties with Hayy Gaon is found in a letter of Nissim's, written 19 May 1027, to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, the liaison between the Maghrib and Babylonia. Nissim complains that Ibn 'Awkal is not properly fulfilling his function. Though others receive letters sent from Baghdad to Qayrawān within six months, it takes Ibn 'Awkal—so it would seem—longer. He lists the letters he had sent in various ways to Hayy, expresses his impatience about the delay and asks that his letters be sent via letter carriers. Before deciding on a different way to send his letters, one better and faster, he admonishes Ibn 'Awkal, but is still ready to continue sending his letters through him, mainly because of the close friendship that had existed between his father Jacob, and Jacob Ibn 'Awkal, Joseph's father.

Nissim b. Jacob was the leader of the Qayrawān Jewish community when the Bedouin tribes laid siege to the city in 1057, which brought about the city's complete destruction. Despite the raging inferno, his major pre-occupation was the fate of the funds which had either already been gathered or were pledged for the yeshivot. This activity is reflected in two letters of Labrāṭ b. Moses Ibn Sughmār, of Sūsa, where many of the Jews of Qayra-

several reasons for his view, which however do not seem to be a sufficient base; the importance and gravity of the matters discussed in this letter are sufficient proof that the gaon meant Jacob b. Nissim; it also seems to be there, in lines 18ff. regards to his son, Nissim. The letter to Fās: 38, a, lines 10-12; b, lines 6-7; "the honored letters", etc., see 33. Mann's opinion: *Texts*, I, 93f.; and a different opinion: Lewin, in *Sherira's Letter*, xxxii, n. a: a book about the rules of oaths; contradicted by Assaf, *Fishman Jub. Vol.*, 46 n. 3, who considered it a book on "talmudic methodology". See on Jacob b. Nissim also: Hirschberg, *Hist.*, 314-316. On the time of his death: Mann, *Texts*, I, 114; see in: Abramson, *Nissim Gaon*, introd., 18f., who has a list of responsa sent to Jacob b. Nissim from Pumbedita, and more details about him.

wān had apparently fled. In spite of the war, desolation and exile, they took care, by the instructions of Nissim b. Jacob, of gathering the funds for the yeshivot, intending to concentrate a sum that would include the pledges already owed to the yeshivot. Nissim b. Jacob ordered Labrāt to publicly read a letter in the synagogue that had arrived from the head of the yeshiva (which one is not specified) and he was getting ready to read it. Labrāt then demanded from his brother, Judah, who was staying in Alexandria, to warn any person holding the funds donated by the people of Qayrawān (so it would seem) for the yeshivot, and even proclaim a severe ban upon anyone tampering with those funds.¹²⁵

(126) The brothers JOSEPH AND NISSIM, the sons of BEREKHIAH, were Nissim b. Jacob's contemporaries. Joseph b. Berekhiah is mentioned in

¹²⁵ "In the language of the Hagarites", see: Adler, *JQR*, 9 (1896/7), 706, a fragment he ascribed to Judah of Barcelona's *Sefer ha-ittim*; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 449 and *idem*, *Texts*, I, 113 n. 9b; 329 n. 7; see Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 57; further there Ibn Da'ūd writes on the triple connection, Hayy Gaon—Nissim b. Jacob—Samuel Ibn Naghrila, the Spanish nagid, on the financial subsidies of the nagid Samuel for Nissim, and on the matter of Nissim's daughter's marriage to Samuel's son, the nagid Joseph. According to him, with the death of Nissim b. Jacob, learning declined in the land of Ifrīqiya. Similar details, which he took mainly from Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Trad.*, are found in Saadia Ibn Danan, 29a-b, who also adds that the family originated from Qal'at Hammād, and that Nissim b. Jacob first stayed in Babylonia. Babylonia is also mentioned in a poem of the nagid Samuel: "...and from the day your high reputation spread over Baabylonia, you were called the chief of the cognizants.... and in Ifrīqiya, as they noticed your honor you were considered one of the geonim", see the *Diwān* (Yarden ed.), 198f. (no. 61). One has to bear in mind that the two were, as mentioned above, in-laws, as Joseph, Samuel's son was Nissim's son-in-law. Nissim b. Jacob is the one to whom the poems no. 60 (pp. 196f.) and no. 84 (pp. 230f., condolences on the death of his son Jacob) were dedicated. Regarding the great influence of the geonim Sherira and Hayy on Nissim b. Jacob, see also Lewin, *Ginzē qedem*, 1 (1921/2), 17ff. See Hirschberg, in his introduction to the *Hibbūr ya'fe* of Nissim b. Jacob, 30-33. Nissim b. Jacob: 162. See a detailed general survey on Nissim b. Jacob and his works: Poznanski, as in the previous note; also: Hirschberg, *History*, 327-339; see the remaining texts of Nissim b. Jacob, gathered and edited by Abramson in his book, *Rav Nissim Gaon*. Nissim's book on the laws of the *lulāv* (Abramson, *ibid.*, 157ff.) is mentioned twice in a letter dealing with an acquisition of books, written about five years after Nissim's death, in 1067, to an unidentified *Rav*, in Mahdiyya, see 841, b, line 14 and in the margin, left; in that letter, the blessing for the dead is added after his name, not only "of blessed memory", as to the others there, but with the addition: *qādōsh*, "the holy one", perhaps an indication that he was murdered. See about that *sefer ha-lulāv*, in Harkavy, *Hadāshim*, 119; Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 43 (1967/8), 127. On the titles *rēsh bē rabbānān*, *alūf*, which he probably earned from Hayy Gaon, see Abramson, *Nissim Gaon*, 246 n. 4. Information on Nissim b. Jacob's death is found in 312, a, lines 13-23; this is a letter from Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl, one of the most important Maghribi merchants in Egypt; the letter was written on 12 August 1062; the news first reached Māzar (Sicily) wherefrom it was transmitted to Alexandria by people travelling from Māzar to Alexandria; that Yeshū'ā was writing to Nehorai b. Nissim, from Alexandria to Fustat; it cannot be ascertained how long the travel of those people took, from Mahdiyya to Sicily and from there to Alexandria; however, the time cannot be very long, and we shall not err in supposing that Nissim's death occurred in the summer of 1062, and we may even be more exact, and assume that it happened on 18 July, and that his burial took place on the 19th (in the letter it says: on a Friday); that was a short time before the departure of those merchants from Sicily, on 23 July, if we were to judge by the very emotional style used by the writer of the letter, Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl, who might have been one of Nissim b. Jacob's pupils. Information about Nissim's severe illness, probably a short time before his death, is found in a letter of Labrāt b. Moses Ibn Sughmār, from Mahdiyya, to Nehorai b. Nissim, 616; as is implied in this letter, and also in 389 (upper margin, line 2), a letter of Nissim b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī to Nehorai b. Nissim, from Sūsa, it seems that at the end of his life Nissim b. Jacob stayed in Sūsa. The letters of Labrāt b. Moses Ibn Sughmār: 612, 613b.

connection with queries he submitted to Hayy Gaon. Together with the students of Jacob b. Nissim's *bēt midrāsh*, he was the one who submitted the famous query about miracles that will be discussed below (sec. 233) and another query submitted "at the Adar *kallā* of the year 1332" (1011) about guardianship of a bequest. A letter sent by Joseph b. Berekhiah in about 1010, apparently to Ibn ʿAwkal, has been preserved which reflects some of the ties with the Babylonian yeshivot, for it mentions the Sura gaon Samuel b. Hophni and speaks of letters of the *mathā'ib*, i.e., heads of the yeshivot, sent by boat and via caravan. The difficulties of these ties are attested by his complaint that two years had gone by without receiving any letters from the yeshivot, and he consults with b. Barhūn (Abraham)—apparently Ismaʿīl (Samuel) al-Tāhirtī—about it. These complaints crop up again in another letter of about 1017, this time in the name of the two brothers (Joseph and Nissim). Only some of the quires with queries and the responsa of Hayy Gaon had arrived, but some have been delayed and they are worried. As I have already indicated, Samuel b. Hophni mentions Joseph b. Berekhiah in two letters that were written about 1008. One of them contains information that Joseph had been appointed trustee of the yeshiva after the death of Jacob b. Nissim. The information is repeated in the other letter, about his appointment as "trustee and treasurer", and he is described as being "among those who teach the nation and are purveyors of charity"; about which the gaon also writes to the community. Thus it is clear that Joseph b. Berekhiah inherited the place of Jacob b. Nissim only insofar as matters of money and shipment were concerned. What some scholars understood, that he had inherited his place as head of the *bēt midrāsh* and was deemed to be a central authority on matters of learning in the Qayrawān community, should not be assumed.

JUDAH B. JOSEPH B. SIMḤA (Simḥa is Abū'l-Thana'), one of the merchants of Qayrawān who were in contact with the yeshiva in the time of Sherira and Hayy, should also be mentioned. He held the titles of *rōsh kallā* (*alūf*) and also of *rōsh ha-seder*. The latter title is one that might have been granted by the exilarch. His name is mentioned in the responsa of the above geonim, also in a letter of Ḥushiel b. Elḥanan to Shemariah b. Elḥanan, where it is stated that Judah traveled from Qayrawān to Mahdiyya with Joseph b. Berekhiah. A fragment of a letter to him from Hayy Gaon, when his father Joseph was still alive, has been preserved, where the gaon refers to the father thus: "...and your father our Lord, Master of his nation and its *salār* (= 'minister' in Persian), may our God guard him....". In the preamble Judah himself is referred to as "our precious one Judah who is *alūf* and *rōsh sidrā*"; the letter is in the name of the gaon himself and that of Asaf *rōsh ha-seder* (i.e., Asaf b. Bezalel), the *alūfīm*, the *tannā'im*, the scribes, the *talmīdīm*. Along with Judah, the gaon also mentions "our Lord and Master Dūnash, and Isaac, Joseph, Abraham, David, and confirms that he had received from Judah b. Joseph two letters.... like two shining stars" (*giyhā*, shine, an expression found also in the letters of Sherira Gaon). It says the yeshiva received them with enormous joy. Judah's name was famous in "all of Babylonia.... even unto Assyria and Syria.... and to Elam and Persia". It appears that Judah b. Joseph had an important position not only in commerce but also in the area of governmental relations, as shown by his successful intervention on behalf of the Jews of Fās when they were

expelled to Ashīr. His activity was immortalized in a poem. In writing about this poem, Mann indeed proves that the poem actually does refer to Judah b. Joseph, of Qayrawān, as opposed to Assaf's assumption about several other possibilities. Joseph's status is also evinced by the sumptuous gift he received according to him in his letter to Isma'īl b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī, "from the Lady", (*al-sayyida*), apparently Umm Malāl, aunt of the ruler, al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs. From the part of the letter still extant it can be seen that the gift included a saddled mule and ceremonial clothes. In summary, it appears that Judah b. Joseph was a scholar, as can be seen in the queries he submitted to the yeshiva. On the other hand, he was certainly among the wealthiest Jews of Qayrawān, for as the gaon writes in the poetic introduction of his letter: "He gives without being asked.... a thousand weights (i.e., dinars) of gold is but a *gērā* for him, and a hundred thousand *kikkārīm* as an *istrā*". Isaac b. Khalfūn, as well, praised his generosity (in other words, also his wealth) in one of his paeans of praise, and also Judah b. Joseph's fine speech and ornate style. And, as noted, he had a distinguished status at the ruler's court, as well.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ The query about miracles: Ashkenazi, *Ṭa'am*, 54b. Harkavy, *Resp.*, 76 (no. 178); see on Joseph b. Berekhiah: Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 203f.; Mann, *Texts*, I, 112f. The father, Berekhiah, is mentioned in 422, b, line 6; the subject there is the books in his legacy and his letters: "our Master Berekhiah, of blessed memory". The two brothers, sons of Berekhiah, were merchants, and some of these business connections are known from a number of Geniza letters, which I shall discuss below, sec. 383, where I shall also discuss whether there was a third brother, Naḥshōn. The letter of Joseph b. Berekhiah: 144; the two brothers: 148; the letters of Samuel b. Hophni: 52, 53, 54. Abū'l-Thanā, see *Ōsar ha-g.* to *ketubbōt*, 68 n. 2; responsa on the name of Judah b. Joseph: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 234f. (no. 442), Kislev 1308 Sel. (Nov.-Dec. 996); Warnheim, *Qevūṣat haḥk.*, 106, of the year 1322 Sel. (1011); see also TS Loan 105, ed. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 69ff.: "*al-daraj al-tāsi'* (the ninth quire), queries of our Lord and Master Judah, son of Master Joseph, to *rabbēnū* Hayy Gaon, of blessed memory", and see *ibid.* in the Index. Hushiel's letter: TS 28.1. See more details on his mentions in responsa, in Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 202f. See Hayy Gaon's letter to Judah b. Joseph: TS Loan 1, 2, together with Bodl MS Heb d 47, f. 3, in Mann, *Texts*, I, 126-134; after a long preamble written as a poem there is a second preamble, in which the Gaon points out his good wishes and prayers for Judah: "since just as we ask for life, and well-being and learning for ourselves, we ask for them for (you), *rōsh ha-seder* and your sons, by nights on our beds.... together, in our prayer". See the lyric preamble of the Gaon also in Brody, *Yedī'ōt ha-mākhōn*, 3 (1936/7), 32-42; see Fleischer's article on Hayy Gaon's poem in honor of Judah *rōsh ha-seder*, *Tarbiz*, 65 (1995/6), 451ff., containing also a discussion on Judah himself and on the lyric preamble, with additional fragments, from the Firkovitch Collection in Petersburg. It emerges that the poem was written on the occasion of the marriage of Judah's son, Dūnash, and the other Judah's sons are mentioned as well; and see *ibid.* additional references. See Mann, *ibid.*, 116 n. 16, who explains that the letter was written before 1017, based on the time of the death of Asaf *rōsh ha-seder*; Asaf has the blessing for the deceased added to his mention in the letter of the exilarch Ezekiah of 1021; see Gil, *Palestine*, II, 45, no. 27, line 23; and see the memorial list, TS 6 K 2, f. 2, in Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 421, where there is mention of Asaf prior to Dōsā b. Saadia, about whom we know that he died in 1017. See the poem of Isaac b. Khalfon (ed. Mirski), in his *diwān*, 71ff. (no. 6); see also the poem, which belonged to the Geniza collection of the Berlin Community, first mentioned by Shirmann, *MGWJ*, 76 (1932), 348 (no. 8), edited: Assaf, *Mi-sifrūt ha-g.*, 220 ff. and his conjectures, *ibid.*, 224; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1932/3), 301ff. *Ha-gevira* (the Lady), see the letter of Judah b. Joseph, 155, b, ll. 1-2; Umm Malāl de facto ruled the country, until October 1023, see Idris, *Berbérie*, 141f.; cf. Goitein, *Letters*, 80; see also Hirschberg, *Zion*, 23-24 (1957/8-1959), 169, who denies the possibility that Judah b. Joseph, as well as his father Joseph, were negidim. Joseph b. Judah is mentioned by Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 204, who points out that he is one of the witnesses in Bodl MS Heb a 2, f. 23 (Cat. 2805, f. 23), a deed of sale, from Abū'l-Ma'ālī to Mawlāh b. Joseph ha-Kohen b.

(127) As to the NEGIDIM of Qayrawān, there have been Abraham b. °Aṭā' and Jacob b. °Amram. These two negidim provided an important basis for the dominant historiographical view that the institution of nagid was a permanent one in the Jewish leadership, parallel to the yeshivot in Babylonia and Palestine. However, this was not the case. A central local leadership of this type did develop at a later stage, in Egypt, starting with Abraham Maimuni (Maimonides' son), i.e., from the beginning of the thirteenth century. There, and at that same time, the holder of the title nagid was the *ra'īs al-yahūd*, leader of the Jews; but in the period under discussion the title of nagid was given only sporadically, as honorary title granted by the yeshivot (in Babylonia and also the yeshiva of Palestine) to the personage closest to the Muslim authority. He was generally a physician, for by virtue of their profession physicians had more or less free access to the ruler.

Impressive evidence about the involvement of Abraham b. °Aṭā', the first of the two personalities of Qayrawān known to have held the title nagid, in matters of government, is the letter of Joseph b. Berekhiah to Joseph Ibn °Awkal of about 1015. According to the writer, 'the sultan', Bādīs b. Maṣūr, was in the vicinity of Tāhīrt where he was engaged in battle against his enemies, and Abraham b. °Aṭā' was with him all the time. This appears to be the war Bādīs fought against Ḥammād b. Buluqqīn, in the summer of 1015, when Tāhīrt was virtually Ḥammād's last refuge after the war turned against him. The writer notes that the nagid when at Bādīs' side was absent from Qayrawān for a prolonged period of time. Yet victory was nigh and they were in Masīla in a state of well-being and security. Joseph b. Berekhiah notes that he is forwarding there important letters meant for the nagid, especially the letters of the heads of the yeshivot. That letter reflects the contrast between Pumbedita and Sura. Dōsā b. Saadia had been ill, but had recovered. Hayy Gaon forbade Joseph from sending grants to Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Hophni, and it is clear that despite the family relations between Hayy and Israel, the old resentment was still there. Joseph b. Berekhiah displays a great interest in Israel (who would inherit the Sura gaonate) in that letter, especially because of his ties with his father, Samuel b. Hophni, to whom he had managed to send queries and also some letters before his death, and he is interested in maintaining these ties with his son, Israel.

Abraham b. °Aṭā' also kept his status at the court of the Zirid rulers at the time of Bādīs' successor, al-Mu°izz (who succeeded his father in May

Adoniah, Qayrawān, Wednesday 14 Iyyar AM 4810, 9 May 1050, ed. Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 9 (1937/8), 215-217. There he signs: "Joseph b. Judah *rōsh ha-seder*". Joseph b. Abī Zakariyyā (the *kunya* Abī Zakariyyā is the usual one for the name Judah) is said to have sent a query, probably to Hayy Gaon, see the responsum edited by Kaufmann, *Bēt talmūd*, 3:64, 1882/3; in a parallel version the responsum is said to have been sent to Ḥayyim b. Obadiah (of Fās) and Moses b. Abī Shekhem, see: Mann, *Texts*, I, 115 and n. 12, citing from Müller, *Maṣṣeḥ*, 227, who cites from the *Responsa* of Solomon b. Adret, V, 44 (no. 121 which is the correct one). See also Assaf, *Teshuvot* (1942), 102, and Harkavy, *Resp.*, 228 (no. 434). See on Joseph b. Judah and his relations with Pumbedita also Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 80ff., who cites more responsa addressed to him, pointing out that he is the one to whom Hayy's commentary to *Berākhot* was sent; Abramson also mentions that Shemariah b. Elhanan wrote his commentary to the Song of Solomon for Judah b. Joseph. Judah b. Joseph died in ca. 1018, which can be deduced from 149, lines 21-23 (the sons of Berekhiah's letter to Joseph Ibn °Awkal).

1016). There is evidence for this in an Arabic chronicle, where it states that al-Mu^cizz sent the Jew Ibn ^cAṭā' (i.e., Abraham) to Abū ^cImrān, considered the greatest legal scholar of the Mālikī school, for clarification of some legal issue. Abū ^cImrān, however, saying that his house was like a mosque, expelled Ibn ^cAṭā' ignominiously. He even ordered the dyeing (in yellow?) of the edge of his Jew's turban when he noticed that he was not wearing the yellow badge (the ^calam). After returning to the ruler and expressing his amazement about what had occurred—that there was a ruler in Ifriqiya aside from him—al-Mu^cizz expressed a kind of excuse for an apology, saying that what he had actually wanted was to show him how great and admired the Islamic scholars were, in the hope that it would move him to change his faith.

Thus it would seem that Abraham b. ^cAṭā', like Joseph b. Berekhiah—apparently his closest friend—and Judah b. Joseph, belonged to the wealthy elite of Qayrawān Jews. Aside from that, he was, as noted, a physician. Nevertheless, it appears that he was very much involved in commercial affairs, as implied in one of Samuel (Isma^cīl) b. Abraham (Barhūn) al-Tāhīrtī's letters to Ibn ^cAwkal, of about 1020. It is clear therein that he was a learned man, a scholar. The gaon Samuel b. Hophni, in his treatise on attributes, penned words of praise for "the physician Abū Ishāq Abraham son of Master ^cAṭā'". Abraham b. ^cAṭā's social standing comes through in the letters he wrote to Joseph Ibn ^cAwkal. True, the letters were composed in the accepted polite style, yet in an imperative tone, with an obvious feeling of authority. One letter deals with the transfer of the nagid's father's remains to Jerusalem. A certain Isaac b. al-Sahl dealt with this. In order to compensate him for a mishap, the nature of which is unknown, the nagid asked that a shipment of coats (*jalābīb*), worth ten dinars, that had been left with a now deceased Spaniard (al-Andalusī) be sent to that Isaac b. al-Sahl (in Jerusalem?), that he sell them and retain the proceeds. He asked two of the most important merchants in Qayrawān, Mūsā b. al-Majjānī and Maimūn b. Ephraim, to arrange the transaction. In another letter, only a small segment of which remains, there is Abraham b. ^cAṭā's confirmation of the receipt of letters and quires—certainly from the yeshivot—via Ibn ^cAwkal.

Abraham b. ^cAṭā' was also a central personage in organizing the monetary support that flowed from Qayrawān to the yeshivot, and he would arrange the large collections for their benefit. After receiving a letter from Hayy Gaon, the sons of Berekhiah write in their letter to Fustat to Ibn ^cAwkal, the nagid assembled the people of Qayrawān—certainly the wealthy men in the city—at his home and collected two hundred dinar, that were later sent with the pilgrims caravan. In order to transfer the money the nagid maintained contact with Maghribis who had settled in Fustat—Jacob Ibn ^cAwkal and his son Joseph after him, and Abū'l-Khayr Mūsā b. Barhūn (Moses b. Abraham) al-Tāhīrtī. It is thus no wonder that Abraham b. ^cAṭā' was greatly respected in Baghdad by the Pumbedita and Sura geonim. A poem in his praise by Hayy Gaon, has been preserved, in which he refers to Abraham b. ^cAṭā' as "the nagid of the nation and head of its *sedārīm*, and the Master and Minister of the Jews".

Especially important were Abraham b. ^cAṭā's ties with the Sura yeshiva, now, as is known, reopened. These ties were especially strengthened

when Samuel ha-Kohen b. Hophni, his son Israel, and Dōsā b. Saadia moved there. There was undoubtedly a special bond between the nagid Abraham b. ʿAṭā and the Sura gaon, Samuel b. Hophni and his son after him, a tie that we have also seen in the letter of Joseph b. Berekhiah that I mentioned above. In a list of books we find “a quire of queries of b. ʿAṭā and Letters of Samuel b. Hophni”. Israel b. Hophni wrote a book concerning laws of prayer for “our Lord and Master Abraham Nagid of the Diaspora, son of our Lord and Master Nathan Head of the Communities”, and he refers to Abraham b. ʿAṭā as “the Banner of the Faith and Crown of the Nation”.

We may assume that Sura's renewal was not a simple matter, it required significant monetary means. We would not be straying far from the truth by assuming that the well-established and wealthy Maghrib Jewry, especially the merchants involved in the maritime trade between the countries of the Mediterranean, put their shoulders to the task, and they were certainly headed by the nagid Abraham b. Nathan (ʿAṭā). Therefore, I believe it was Abraham b. ʿAṭā who was the cryptic personality in whose honor one Abraham ha-Kohen composed poems, dedicating them to the man who renewed Sura, whose name according to one of the acrostics, is Abraham b. N.... Neither would we be mistaken by saying it is Abraham b. Nathan (ʿAṭā) nagid of Qayrawān. Segments of the poem were published by: (a) Schechter (1903); (b) Mann (1919); (c) Scheiber (1953); and (d) *idem* (1968). Below I will mention the fragments by the letters in parentheses (a) to (d). The more or less substantial statements found in these fragments are, according to the above order: (a) his house is a meeting place of scholars; Nahum (b. Joseph al-Baradānī) declaims there from Yannai's *piyyūṭim*; sons of Nahum: Baruch, Yannai, Solomon (about the Baradānis I have written above); Abraham gives much alms, is a peace-maker; renewed Sura; God *hiqṣīnō*, that is, placed him in a high post; he has two daughters; there is mention of one son of Eli ha-Kohen (this Eli was the brother of Abraham's mother, see below); Abraham ha-Kohen calls himself: “your servant”, and he is apparently the author of the poems; ʿAmram ha-Kohen is also mentioned; Abraham had three sons; the great of the kingdom gather at his home; he was also active in Jerusalem; his lord is a man of war, he fights the wicked, and the men of the Nile (Egypt); there is deep respect for Abraham in Babylonia (Shinar); he is a faithful supporter of the Jewish communities in Babylonia and Byzantium (Edom; southern Italy?). (b) he is accorded great honor, he has his own flag, the army respects him; the writer is proud that he himself is called Abraham, like the hero of his poem; Abraham sees to the yeshivot, is like a father to its *sālārīm* (ministers) and the Master of the sanhedrin (scholars) of “God's heritage”—in other words, of the Jewish people; he has four sons: Isaac, Jacob, Sahl, Joseph, and daughters; his sister's son is named Hasan; his mother is from a priestly family; her brother's name is Eli. (c) he has a persecuted brother who was exiled from his home; there is mention of Ḥasan, his sister's son (“handsome as his name”—Ḥasan in Arabic means handsome); his mother's brother (Eli ha-Kohen) has many sons; Ḥasan has three sons; Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī is mentioned. (d) Abraham's brother is mentioned; there is none such as Abraham, neither in Babylonia or in Assyria (Akkad) or in Palestine; he is the staff of the Diaspora in Babylonia and Egypt.

Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī did indeed emigrate to Ifrīqiyyā, as we have seen above, and it was there, in Qayrawān, not in Baghdad as was generally assumed, that he uttered the *piyyūṭim* mentioned above. One should pay attention to the word play around the root NGD (*nagid*) (b, recto, line 8), and to Abraham's support of the priests (*ibid.* verso, line 4). It seems to me that what is meant is the family of Samuel b. Hophni, the restorers of Sura, and I have already noted the special ties between Abraham b. 'Aṭā' and this family. The point is strengthened by a blessing for Israel ha-Kohen, that is, the son of Samuel b. Hophni. Because of the fact that he, not his father Samuel, is mentioned in the poem, while on the other hand there is no indication that he was gaon, it can be concluded that the poems were composed during the gaonate of Dōsā b. Saadia, around the year 1015.

Abraham b. 'Aṭā' died around 1018, as we learn from a letter of the sons of Berekhiah to Ibn 'Awkal, written at that time. The writer, Joseph b. Berekhiah, considered the *nagid*'s death as a great disaster for the Jews of Qayrawān. Jacob b. 'Amram, who is mentioned in a number of letters from, or concerning, Palestine, between 1035-1040, inherited the title of *nagid*. As to his ties with Babylonia, only the preamble of a letter of 1040, addressed to him by the exilarch Hezekiah b. David, in a florid style and full of praise, noting his benevolence towards the scholars, has been preserved. From Hezekiah's letter it is clear that the *nagid* was not a scholar, but that he supported scholars by providing food and clothing. It is implied that since he was involved in affairs of state, as was his predecessor, he was familiar with the ruling family of the Zirids.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ See my discussion of the problem of the *negidūt*, Gil, *History*, 595ff., and see there more references to previous discussions. See on the *negidim* of Qayrawān: Ben-Sasson, *Semihat ha-q.*, 348-374. Joseph b. Berekhiah's letter: 146. The battle of 1015, see: Idris, *Berbérie*, 108f., and see *ibid.* (especially on p. 112), details on the withdrawal to Tāhīrt and on the departure of Bādīs to Masīla (=Muhammadiyya) in August 1015. See the story of Abū 'Imrān: Ibn Nājī, III, 199ff.; Idris, *AIEO*, 13 (1955), 55f.; *idem*, *Berbérie*, 178f.; cf. Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1962), 12. Abū 'Imrān died on 8 May 1039, see Ibn Nājī, *ibid.* The letter of Samuel b. Moses al-Tāhīrtī: 119, b, line 10. The book on the attributes, see Goldziher, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 99f.; cf. Abramson, *Kiryat sefer*, 56 (1980/81), 721ff., on another fragment from that book, *al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt*, where he proves that its author was the gaon Samuel b. Hophni. See more on the relations between the *nagid* and the gaon Samuel b. Hophni, in Ben-Sasson, *Tarbiz*, 55 (1986/7), 187f. The letter to Ibn 'Awkal: 163; Isaac b. al-Sahl, one of the Maghribi merchants, is mentioned several times in this period, in matters of trade, see the Index in vol. IV of Gil, *Be-malkhūt*, and *idem*, *History*, 632; *idem*, *Palestine*, III, 309 (no. 520, lines 13-14); the form al-Sahl (with the definite article), is rare; see also Umm al-Sahl, in 483, a, margin, right. It appears that the accident of the garments transport was related to a maritime mishap, such as an attack on the ship. The fragment of the letter: 164. Hayy's poem was edited by Poznanski (under the pseudonym *ṣefonī ma'arāvī*) in *Ha-sefirā*, no. 103, 1899, from a Petersburg manuscript; it says in its caption: "*mukātaba* (exchange of letters) between our Lord Hayy Gaon and Master Abraham b. 'Aṭā, the *nagid* of Qayrawān". See also *idem*, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 185; the poem was reprinted by Brody from Bodl MS Heb d 65, f. 42, in *Yedī'ot ha-mākhōn*, 3 (1935/6), 27-31; cf. Ben-Sasson, *Pe'amim*, 18 (1983/4), 14, and n. 47; see what Joseph b. Berekhiah wrote to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, about the letters of "*sayyidnā* Hayy" to the community (i.e. of Qayrawān), which praise "Mr. Abū Ishāq (=Abraham)... *Nagid* of the Diaspora": 148, a, lines 11-12. Among the masses he was called *sayyid al-jāliya* (Lord of the exiles), see the letter of Isaac b. Abraham al-Mushammar(?), from Fustat, to his son in Qayrawān: 165, line 13. The *daftar*, etc., see Mann, *Texts*, I, 653 (taken from TS 10 K 20.9; Allony, *Alei sefer*, 6-7 (1978/9), 39ff.; see the treatise about prayer, TS 10 H 11, f. 1 (this is the correct shelf-mark), in Mann, *JQR*, NS

(128) Before the Muslim conquest, SPAIN had been part of the Roman-Byzantine world and, as a matter of course, belonged to the direct sphere of influence and authority of Palestine and its Sanhedrin, i.e., the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, then situated in Tiberias. However, we have relatively early information about the ties between Muslim Spain, named by the Arabs *Andalus*, and Babylonia and its personages. We have seen the episode concerning Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai (Havīvai, in another version), the deposed exilarch who went into exile in the West, “and it is he who wrote the Talmud for the Andalusians, from memory, not from a written text” (above, sec. 78), a story from the end of the eighth century. Jacob b. Mordecai ha-Kohen, gaon of Sura (798-802?), had Spanish ties, as we learn from a geonic responsum to someone who asked: “we hear that in Fās and in parts of Andalus they examine (the cattle’s lungs).... we are told that our Lord and Master Jacob Gaon has permitted us to examine it”. The responsum says: “.... the Andalusians who abide by our Lord and Master Jacob Gaon of blessed memory: our Lord and Master Jacob Gaon was here and we know his custom, what he forbade and what he allowed”. According to the

11 (1920/21), 415. The poems about Abraham *rabbēnū*: TS 8 J 1, ed. Schechter, *Saadyana*, 66-74; BM Or 5554 B, f. 20, ed. Mann, *JQR*, NS 9 (1918/9), 157-160; DK 148, ed. Scheiber, *Zion*, 18 (1952/3), 8-13; Scheiber, *AO* (Hung.), 21 (1968), 251-255; and see the commentaries of these scholars, joining the references above; praises similar to the poems of Abraham ha-Kohen are found also in the above-mentioned poem of Hayy Gaon, see Brody, *ibid.*, 27ff., such as: “.... the unique one of my people, who will set free prisoners and will admonish whoever boasts and is vain.... and who returns to life those who are about to die....”. See more on these poems: Malter, *Saadia*, 28-31, 57f., 132 (based on Schechter, *Saadyana*, 28ff.), who tried to ascribe these poems to Saadia, and the riposte of Mann, *REJ*, 73 (1922), 105; and also *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 177f., and *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 231. See also poems written in honor of Abraham b. ‘Aṭā’ by Isaac b. Khalfōn (ed. Mirski), 63ff. (no. 2: on the occasion of the nagid’s daughter’s marriage to Isma’l b. Nabbāt [Samuel b. Šemah?]); 151ff. (no. 72, praising his generosity). See more on Abraham b. ‘Aṭā’: Hirschberg, *History*, 211-213. The letter of the sons of Berekiah: 149. Letters mentioning Jacob b. ‘Amram, see Gil, *Palestine*, II, nos. 128, 191, 300, 344. He was involved in the conflict with Nathan b. Abraham, see *idem*, *History*, 700, 710f. In a letter of Nathan b. Nehorai, from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim, there is mention of “‘Amram, son of the nagid, of blessed memory” (beginning of the 1060s; it says about him that he was in Alexandria and went to Fustat, carrying more letters of Nathan b. Nehorai; it is almost certain that the son of the nagid Jacob b. ‘Amram is meant; see 415, *a*, line 4. Ezekiah’s letter: 69, cf. Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1961/2), 19. See also Hirschberg, *History*, 213-216. After having published (in *PAAJR*, 57 [1990/91], 112ff.) my view on the identity of the Abraham to whom the poems were dedicated, Prof. Fleischer wrote to me to contradict that view: the notable influence of the poems’ subject in Babylonia is felt in them, he therefore stayed in Babylonia; this fact is also evident in some more expressions in these poems, he therefore cannot be Abraham b. ‘Aṭā’; however, in my view: the Sura yeshiva was reopened in ca. 990, with the aid of the Maghribis, headed by Abraham b. ‘Aṭā’, the nagid; Šemah Sedeq, the gaon of the renewed yeshiva, died apparently towards the end of 997, and in 999 Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī wrote a letter (58) from Qayrawān to the gaon Samuel ha-Kohen b. Hophni. In what I wrote in the present section I have shown how great a role was that of the nagid of Qayrawān in the reopening of the Sura yeshiva (and see more on it *infra*, secs. 214-215); it is therefore evident that Abraham b. ‘Aṭā’ (Nathan) is the one to whom the poems were dedicated; it is also discernible that Nahum al-Baradānī was at that time in Qayrawān, close to the nagid, and that he is the one meant by the poet, Abraham ha-Kohen. The mentions of Babylonia (Akkad, Shinar, Ashur, Elam, the Chebar River) are only meant to express the poet’s feelings about the renown achieved by the subject of his poems among the Babylonian Jews, as also in Palestine and in ‘Edom’, thanks to his actions in aiding the yeshivot, as also everyone in those countries who is in need of help; all these details suit the nagid of the Maghrib, Abraham b. Nathan-‘Aṭā’.

subsequent discussion it appears that Ikhōmai, Jacob's brother, also a Sura gaon (802-810?), as well as the succeeding gaon, Isaac Šādōq b. Jesse (810-812), had ties with Spain.

Early ties between Pumbedita and Christian Spain, *Aspāmiya*, can be found from the mid-ninth century, at the time of Palṭoi b. Abayē (842-858), when the people of Christian Spain asked that (in Pumbedita) they write for them "the Talmud and its commentary", and they indeed did so, and sent it to them. Towards the end of the ninth century there is mention of shipments of queries along with money, to the Pumbedita yeshiva "from a place called Andalus" in a letter of the yeshiva that, it can be assumed, was written by the same gaon, Hayy b. David. At about the same time the connections with Spain (whether the Christian or Muslim part is not certain) were maintained by the Sura geonim Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai and Sar Šālōm b. Boaz. Afterwards we find Naṭrūnai Gaon b. Hillai responding to the people of Lucena about merchandise gentiles had brought to the market on the eve of the Sabbath or on a holiday, whether it was permissible to purchase it on market day: "Since Lucena is a place of Jews and there are many Jews there.... and there is hardly a gentile there....; if even in Cordova such a thing happened, which is the seat of the kingdom and there are many Jews and few gentiles.... if it has been brought for the Jews then it is forbidden.... then, the more so, this is the case for Lucena". Except for evidence about the connection with Babylonia, we see in it also evidence about the profusion of Jews in the cities of Muslim Spain. Mann believed that Naṭrūnai's responsum concerning vineyards, whether it was permissible to trim and plough them on the semi-festival days, was also meant for the Lucena congregation. Naṭrūnai Gaon also mentions Spain in his responsum regarding a eulogy for a *nāsī* of the court: "A faraway place such as Aspāmiya and such as Firanja (whether this refers to France or Italy is not clear) and all places where news only arrives after 12 months, are absolved from eulogizing and closing down synagogues and *battē midrāshōt*...." We also find that: "This is what Master Naṭrūnai Gaon sent to the scholars of Aspāmiya...."; also: "Thus is the responsum of Master Naṭrūnai b. Hillai head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsiya to the congregation of Lucena, through Master Joseph the Light of our eyes....". It would appear that the mention of Naṭrūnai Gaon, and also of Sar Šālōm Gaon, are related to Spain even when not explicitly said, but only as introduced by: "thus it was sent". Above, we have found a Lucena man, Joseph, who was active in those ties. More prominent was Eleazar b. Samuel, who held the title of *rōsh kallā*, or *alūf*, that he had apparently received from the yeshiva of Sura. He had seen ^cAnan's *Sefer ha-miṣwōt* (book of precepts, in the original: *Sefer ha-tō'ēvōt*—i.e., abominations) and gave Naṭrūnai testimony about its contents and it was he who submitted the query relating to Bustanai, that I have cited above (sec. 47); and as Abramson has shown, his time can be set at that of the geonim Naṭrūnai and Palṭoi (i.e., c. 853-857).

At the time of Naṭrūnai Gaon's successor, ^cAmram b. Sheshnā, there is evidence about the ties with Barcelona in his responsum regarding blessings: "^cAmram b. Sheshnā head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsiya to all the scholars and their students and the rest of our brethren of the House of Israel who reside in the city of Barcelona....". If we turn at the same time to Pumbedita we find that at the time of Isaac Šemaḥ b. Palṭoi (872-888) the

Spaniards inquire regarding "unclear matters they find in the entire Talmud, that are so numerous that even several donkeys could not carry them"; those queries are kept by the writer of the letter (Naḥshōn?), the grandson of Tōv. Furthermore, people from Spain would address the writer's grandfather, Tōv, by whom Tōv the chief judge is meant (c. 900), but also Isaac Šādōq b. Jesse and his son, Naḥshōn Gaon, and Moses, Naḥshōn's brother. All of them were the writer's maternal antecedents. The Spaniards' queries, he writes, "prove their high intelligence and great wisdom". Also mentioned are queries the Spaniards directed to the gaon of Pumbedita, Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph. Alexander Marx, Mann after him, and afterwards Ashtor, as well, believed that the letter written by the anonymous "grandson of Tōv", was intended for Ḥisdai Ibn Shaprūt, that the fulsome praise glorifying the addressee was meant for him, and that even the large monetary contribution mentioned that was sent to the yeshiva should be attributed to Ḥisdai. However, the letter writer twice mentions Aspāmiya, i.e., Christian Spain. Thus it is doubtful whether it had indeed been sent to Ḥisdai Ibn Shaprūt.¹²⁸

(129) We know of a letter that Saadia Gaon sent to Spain, according to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Tradition*, quoting Meir b. Vives, "who saw a sheet of Saadia Gaon's upon which was written: for the congregations of

¹²⁸ See on the matter of Naṭrūnai b. Ḥaninai and his coming in Spain also Ashtor, *Jews*, 121f. and his own view on what is said about it in Sherira's *Letter*. See a short cohesive survey on the relations of the Babylonian yeshivot and Spain, in Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 485ff. Jacob b. Mordecai: *Resp. Hemdā gen.*, sec. 15; cf. Ashtor, *Jews*, I, 129f. Rosenthal, *Shenātōn*, 11-12 (1983-1986), 604. Paltoi b. Abayē, see the letter of Tōv's grandson, 13, c, lines 8ff.; see the *ʿArūkh*, s.v. *aspāmiyā*; the name is first mentioned in BT *Yevāmōt*, 115b; it appears that the early meaning of the name was Apamaea, whereas in the geonic sources it appears to designate Christian Spain, and the name's origin might be in *Marca Hispanica*, which designates the area of Barcelona, ruled by the Franks from the year 801 onwards. The text in *Yevāmōt* (above) which says that Isaac the exilarch went from Qurṭeba (Cordova) to Aspāmiya, is strange, and I tend to accept the view of Rapoport, *ʿErekḥ*, 157, that it is a misscript of the copiers; cf. Abramson, *Sinai*, 35 (1970/71), 42ff.; the other letter from Pumbedita: 4, b, line 18; cf. Ashtor, *ibid.*, 84, 88. The responsa of Naṭrūnai: Warnheim, *Qevūšat ḥakh.*, 110f.; Ibn Ghayyāth, *Shaʿarē s.*, II, 20, and see Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 443; *Shaʿarē s.*, 20b (no. 12), and a parallel version in Ibn Ghayyāth, *ibid.*, II, 44; *Seder ʿamram g.*, I, 25a, II, 230. Eleazar alūf: *Seder ʿamram g.*, II, 207; cf. Lewin, *Meṭivōt*, 33; Ashtor, *ibid.*, 91; Abramson, *Shenātōn*, 11-12 (1983-1986), 31ff.; Rivlin, *Sidrā*, 7 (1991), 128. See the sources about Lucena gathered by Harkavy. *Ḥadāshim*, 133; and see also Rivlin, *Sheṭarē al.*, 27ff.; *ʿAmram gaon: Resp. (Lyck)*, 21 (no. 56); Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi: 13, d, lines 7ff.; e, lines 18-19; see *ibid.*, c, end, continued on d, that high praise of Aspāmiya: Alexander Makedon wanted to go up to the sky, so the sages advised him "to go to Aspāmiya, where there still live sages of the first exile"; cf. Abramson, *Nissim Gaon*, 306f., note. See on the letter of Tōv's grandson: Marx, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 768; Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 229f.; *idem*, *HUCA*, 3 (1926), 309; Ashtor, *Jews*, I, 238f.; Barcelona, as said above, was in Christian hands (the Franks), from December 801, when it was conquered by Louis, Charlamagne's son. The Muslim conquered it, for short periods, in 856 and 985. During the second half of the ninth century and the first half of the tenth, the Umayyads were at peace with the rulers of Barcelona; the peace was consolidated in 940, by Ḥisdai Ibn Shaprūt, in treaties he signed with Guifré (Wifred) II, and his son Sunier after him. It is to this period of peace that these here mentioned letters and links belong. See Ibn Ḥayyān al-Qurṭubī, 454f.; Wansharīshī (Monés), *Matājir*, 168; *Eṭ* s.v. Barshalūna (Seybold, Huici Miranda). Mann assumed that 42, a letter to an anonymous *rōsh kallā*, was written to Ḥisdai Ibn Shaprūt; it mentions "our Master Isaac, of blessed memory"; Isaac was Ḥisdai's father's name; see Mann's article, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 252ff.; but in my view the letter is from Hayy Gaon, and belongs to a much later period.

Cordova, Elvira, Lucena, Pechina, Calsena, Seville and Merida, the great city and all the towns of Israel in its environs". It appears that Saadia wrote the letter after he was appointed gaon, that is, after 928. Abraham Ibn Da'ūd says nothing about the contents of the letter or when it was written. We have much more information about the ties of the Babylonian yeshivot with Spain beginning with the end of the tenth century, from the time of Sherira Gaon onwards. When engaged in a bitter dispute with the previous gaon, Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq, Sherira, then "chief judge of the court of the yeshiva of the Diaspora", appealed to "the communities of Israel residing in the cities of ANDALUS and ASPĀMIYA and all the cities of the West and the land of Ifrīqiya", requesting their help. Monies that used to be sent by Jews in Christian Spain and Andalus to the Babylonian yeshivot would be directed via Qayrawān, as testified in the letter of the sons of Berekhiah to Ibn ʿAwkal, in about 1017. From there great merchants, such as the Tāhīrtīs, would send them to Fustat, and from Fustat they would be forwarded to their destination. The Spaniards (of Aspāmiya) turned to Hayy Gaon "about their queries and incomprehensions".

The special relations with Babylonia, mainly with Pumbedita and its geonim Sherira and Hayy, are also expressed in the story of the dispute between Ḥanōkh b. Moses and Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr, mainly in the readiness of the geonim to send their responsa to the queries of Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr, whom they had known before his departure from Spain. According to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr had originally set out to meet Hayy Gaon, who supported him and "hated R. Ḥanōkh", apparently because "the four scholars", that is, the heroes of the four captives story that I have discussed above (secs. 122-123), "have cut off the income of the yeshivot, with the result that the yeshivot were reduced to poverty". This statement should be understood literally. In other words: when Ḥanōkh b. Moses became the leader of Cordova Jewry, and certainly with great influence over the communities of Andalus, he reduced the money flow to Babylonia and used the public funds and contributions for local needs. Abraham Ibn Da'ūd also notes that the king (i.e., al-Ḥakam II, the Umayyad caliph of Cordova, 16 October 961 - 1 October 976) was very pleased "to hear that the Jews of his kingdom have no need for the Babylonians". This happened after Moses, Ḥanōkh's father, established himself in Cordova, at the time of Sherira's gaonate. Thus Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's statement is probably correct. The center Moses, Ḥanōkh's father established, afterwards headed by his son, was compatible with the ruler's anti-Abbasid policy, and he certainly preferred the Spanish center to having his Jews dependent on Baghdad. Thus the Spaniards' queries and, as noted, their monetary support dwindled; as formulated by Abraham Ibn Da'ūd: "queries which had formerly been addressed to the yeshivot were now directed to him". Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, the Muslim author of the great book on physicians and scholars, also knew that the Jews of Spain had to have recourse to the Jews of Baghdad on halachic issues and on fixing the dates of the festivals, until the time of Ḥisdai Ibn Shaprūt (whom he calls Ibn Iṣḥāq), who served the caliph (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III and then his son al-Ḥakam II), who was one of the greatest Jewish scholars, excelled in his knowledge of halacha, and

who was the first to develop halachic studies among the Jews of Andalus.¹²⁹

(130) On this issue of the Spaniards' independent halachic decisions, it is appropriate to add the responsum in the *Ge'ōnē mizrāḥ ū-ma'arāv* collection, in the matter of a conflict between two brothers over their father's inheritance. At issue is a compound and apartments. The conflict happened in Fustat in 1303 Sel., 922. Müller suggested that this responsum was "perhaps from R. Joseph, the Spaniard, or from R. Moses b. Ḥanōkh.... and if I had concrete proof I would say that it was from Ḥanōkh b. Moses, because of its difficult laconic language and that the peroration was in his style". A fragment of this responsum is found in the Taylor-Schechter Geniza collection, where it indeed says that "it was sent from R. Joseph 'chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof' (2 Kings ii:12), 'the right pillar' (1 Kings vii:21)", etc. Mann saw it as confirmation of Müller's assumption that the responsum was from Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr. It could not have been from Moses b. Ḥanōkh because he was no longer alive then. It appears that the Fustat people submitted the query of Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr when he was staying in Fustat. Another fragment of the same responsum is among the responsa in the Adler collection. The opening of that collection of responsa states that it was "of R. Joseph Gaon of Mātā Maḥsiya"; Alexander Marx, who edited them, suggested that they be ascribed to Joseph b. Jacob, i.e., Bar Saṭyā, a contemporary of Saadia Gaon. Assaf argued in opposition that the responsum was indeed from Joseph b. Isaac Ibn Abī Tūr, referred to as gaon by later generations. Joseph b. Jacob was no longer alive in 992. Likewise, we have the versions of responsa that Sherira and Hayy sent to Abū Ya'qūb al-Andalusī, and it should be assumed that the reference is to Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr (Abū Ya'qūb was the usual *kunya* of someone named Joseph).

Despite his negative attitude towards Ḥanōkh b. Moses, Abraham Ibn Da'ūd goes on to tell us that Hayy Gaon refused to grant an audience to Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr when the latter was in Babylonia, "for if he came he

¹²⁹ See Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 59; Baron, *Saadia Anniv. Vol.*, 55 n. 103, assumed that the word *gilāyōn* used there signifies a circular letter, sent simultaneously to several communities, as it was usual during conflicts; yet, he assumed, in the letter were parts dealing with specific matters of each community; but this is something one cannot prove nor disprove; see on the relations of the geonim Sherira and Hayy with Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr: Fleischer, *Asufot*, 4 (1989/90), note: 133 n. 2, proposing that a mention of Barcelona should be added in 14, in the part which is missing, as mentioned in *Resp. Lyck*, 21a (no. 56, responsa of the gaon 'Amram b. Sheshnā). Sherira's letter: 19, cf. Mann, *Ha-zofeh*, 11 (1926/7), 147ff.; *idem, Texts*, I, 84f.; Ashtor, *Jews*, I, 240; II; Assaf, *Teqūfat ha-g.*, 55, assumed that 25 was also written to Spain; but, as I have shown above (sec. 106), it was destined for Fustat. Berekhaiah's sons' letter: 148, lines 9ff.; people of Spain turn to Hayy Gaon "in the matter of their queries and doubts", see *Resp. Sha'arē tesh.*, 10b (no. 99), where it says "....from all countries, Yemen, and east, and north, and the land of Kūsh, and Ashkenaz, and France, and Aspāmiyā and the remotest places....". In the view of Ashtor, *Jews*, II, 38f., the Spanish Jews were attracted by the rationalist-scientific approach of Hayy Gaon. See Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 48ff.; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, 498; see what Hayy Gaon wrote about Ḥanōkh b. Moses: 37, lines 47ff.; he requests the addressee, apparently Jacob b. Nissim, to advise Ḥanōkh concerning answers to letters written to him by Sherira, and we may assume that those letters contained demands regarding both financial matters and the dispute with Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr (Sherira died a few weeks later, on 3 September 1006; the letter was written on 8 August); cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 9 (1918/9), 169, n. 163; *idem, Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 282ff.; 6 (1934/5), 238f.; *Texts*, I, 111.

would feel as if the *rav* (i.e., Ḥanōkh) was being ostracized". What is meant is that the gaon declined to become overly involved in the dispute. Furthermore, a certain coolness towards the Spaniards and their leaders can be sensed in the censure implied in the gaon's statement when asked about their custom, opposed to the Talmud, of not reading the *Targum*. Even in the Mishnā it is decreed that one should read the *Targum*, he responded.

An important issue was that of the close ties between Hayy Gaon and the Spanish nagid, Samuel Ibn Naghrila. As Mann suggested, it is probable that after the dissolution of the Cordova caliphate, the ties between the Spanish Jews and Pumbedita were strengthened again. Samuel the Nagid's esteem for Hayy Gaon is obvious from the dirge he composed after his death: "wail you after *rav* Hayy, who subsists when he does not exist, and came to his end as if he did not live, but he lived about a hundred (years), and it is as if he did not live.... and truth departed from Pumbedita and Sura and Syria. And although he went away and did not earn a son to answer any malice and error.... sons he had in every country, whether Arab or Edomite.... Say unto those who did him evil and set snares to trap him and laid in wait for him as if for an animal and were towards him scoundrels like Sanbalat and Tobias and lurked for him" (this may be an allusion to what was stated above, that is in reference to Moses b. Ḥanōkh and his son Ḥanōkh). Elsewhere it states: "Yet *rav* Hayy was the greatest of them all.... From his well I draw and from his bread I eat, and I find nothing that is bitter". Also Solomon Ibn Gabirol, who was sixteen when the gaon died, composed three dirges, among which he says: ".... and where is the *rav* who can be like Hayy, and where is the mountain that can be like Sinai....".

The people of the west were drawn towards the east in those generations, and the Spaniards crossed lands and sea for Babylonia to imbibe wisdom. Such was the case with Isaac b. Moses, "known as b. Sukarī, of the congregation of Denia", in Spain, who held the titles of *ḥavēr* and *rav*, and who "traveled from Denia to the land of the east and was ordained gaon there and sat on the seat of our Master Hayy of blessed memory"—thus writes Abraham Ibn Da'ūd. But, he contends, "he was not their colleague and did not gain strength in their days.... and in our way we have learned that it did not remain any name or trace of learning in all the land of Shinar" (i.e., Babylonia). Abraham Ibn Da'ūd had indeed exaggerated greatly, his aim being to prove that Babylonia ceased to be a center of learning and that the seniority had now passed to Spain.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ See *Ge'ōnē mizr.*, 42b-44a (no. 172), and what Müller wrote, *ibid.*, 42a, n. 1; see TS G 7, f. 2, ed. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 465 n. 32; responsa, from ENA 1765, ed. Marx, *Ginzē q.*, III:57, 1924/5; see *ibid.*, 61, no. 3; Assaf, *Kiryat s.*, 2 (1924-1946), 183; Assaf apparently forgot to mention that Müller already proposed such a possibility, as said above; see citations from responsa to Abū Ya'qūb al-Andalusī, in Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 284ff.; on the dispute and the involvement of Sherira and Hayy, see Ashtor, *Jews*, I, 355-361; something which does not pertain to our subject, but is worth being mentioned: TS NS 325.140 contains a cover sheet of a poem by "al-ḥazzān ibn al-Jāzfinī Abū'l Ḥasan b. Mu'ammār" (who is Yefet b. Ḥayyim), for "Ibn al-Shatnash" ([cf. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, pp. 66f. of the English translation, and the editor's note to line 70] who is Ibn Abī Tūr), "of blessed memory" (in Arabic, in Arabic script). The poem was written to the Saturday whose pericope was *wa-yar' bālāq* (Nu. 22:2 "and Balak... saw"). The ḥazzān Yefet b. al-Jāzfinī lived in Palestine, in Sepphoris, see Gil, *Te'uda* 7 (1990/91), 286; *idem*, *Cathedra*, 70 (1994), 33f.; the matter of the Targum: Judah of Barcelona, *Sefer ha-'iitīm*, 267. See the *ḏiḡwān* of Samuel the nagid (Yarden), 91, 231-236; Solomon Ibn Gabirol, *Shīrē ha-ḥōl*

(131) Elsewhere, I have already noted the ties between the Jews of the northern Hījāz, in Wādī al-Qurā, and the Pumbedita geonim, according to a list of books in the Geniza, where the “queries of people from Wādī al-Qurā to Our Master Sherira Gaon and Hayy *av-bēt-dīn*” are mentioned. We do not know whether Wādī al-Qurā was then considered a part of Hījāz or of Palestine. This information has particular significance because it deals with a Jewish population mentioned by Islamic sources from the time of the Prophet of Islam and that remained there many generations afterwards, as proven by those written remains from about AD 1000. From the preamble to the first query it is clear that it dealt with agriculture, specifically date cultivation, the occupation of the Jews of the northern Hījāz from time immemorial. It would appear that those ties with Pumbedita had an earlier history about which we have no further details, and there is apparent evidence of strong ties over generations between the Babylonian center and the localities of the Arabian Peninsula, simultaneously with the ties between the peninsula’s Jews with the Sanhedrin in Palestine. It is “the Jewish priests of Tiberias” who—according to a Syriac source—spurred the Jewish king of Ḥimyar (present-day Yemen) to persecute the Christians in his kingdom, especially in Najrān, being the reason for the war and the Ethiopian invasion of Yemen at about AD 520. About 500 years later we see the Yemenite communities maintaining strong ties with Pumbedita. Yemen was then an important commercial nexus between Egypt and India. It is safe to assume that there was an immigration of Babylonian Jews to Yemen over the generations, perhaps especially in the tenth century, when, according to the sources, there was a large migration of Babylonian Jews, as we shall see below.

Explicit testimony about Pumbedita’s ties with the Jewish population in Yemen and the eastern part of the peninsula is in Sherira Gaon’s letters to the communities, as he refers to them, of Yaman and Yamāma. Šanʿā certainly had a large Jewish community. This can be seen in a letter mentioning a local *alūf*, Yedidiaḥ, also known as Nethanel, and his sons Sar Šālōm and Hayyim, “who are emissaries and trustees of the Gate of the yeshiva”, and the gaon threatens those who “make light of their honor” with excommunication. Another *alūf* mentioned is Sar Šālōm b. Isaac. Further down there is mention of Tarj, which according to Yāqūt was the name of a mountain and also of a valley on the way to Yaman, near Tabāla. It appears that the reference is to Jews living in villages of that area. One Ezra, is mentioned, as is another man only whose profession is mentioned, *harōqeah* (“the perfume dealer”). The gaon says they are a totally wicked faction who reject his authority and that they have been excommunicated. It is implied that their crime was collecting money for another yeshiva, that is, the yeshiva of Palestine or of Sura, or perhaps for the exilarch. Further down, Šaʿda, the northernmost Jewish community in Yemen is mentioned, where a trustee of the yeshiva, ʿAmram b. Yehōḥānān resided. It is implied that he was wavering between Pumbedita and one of its competitors, and it says of him that “he loves our counterpart”. If the Pumbeditans would not

(Yarden), 302; Isaac b. Moses: Ibn Daʿūd, *Book of Trad.*, 61; cf. Poznanski, *REJ*, 65 (1913), 314; Mann, *Hazofeh*, 6 (1921/2), 105; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 207. See the Geniza fragment 26, where one can still read “...b. Moses (Mishoi?), grandson of Isaac, head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora”; and in Arabic script: “...Mūsā b. Ishaq”.

have liked him a ban would have been issued. His main guilt was holding 80 dinars meant for the yeshiva and sending only 126 'silvers' (apparently dirhams of silver). If he does not send what is due to the yeshiva, the gaon will compose "writs of excommunication and a deed of being damned (*yptq' di-le'fūta*)". Also mentioned are the congregations of people of 'Adan residing in Hīla and the people of al-Nabīl and al-Ḥabīl. Monies from Tabāla in Yemen, i.e., northern Yemen, are being sent to the yeshiva via the sons of Berekhiah, in Qayrawān and Jacob Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat, a total of 20 dinars (c. 1017).

An upheaval in the foreign ties of Babylonian Jewry took place in the twelfth century. The main reason for this turn of events was the deterioration in Iraq's status, its economic decline and the westward emigration of many of its Jewish merchants. At first, the emigration led to the rise and flourishing of Qayrawān at the time of the Fatimids, and after 969, when they conquered Egypt, to the economic rise of Fustat and Alexandria. Subsequently the ties between the Jews of Yemen and Egypt strengthened, to the extent that in the twelfth century we find evidence of close ties between Yemen and the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* of Palestine, now situated in Egypt (after the Crusader destruction of Palestine's Jewish population) under the leadership of the gaon Maṣliāḥ ha-Kohen b. Solomon. It appears, on the other hand, that the Jews of Yemen remained loyal to the Babylonian exilarch.¹³¹

(132) Elsewhere, I have discussed the ties between the center in Palestine, i.e., the yeshiva in Jerusalem, and Europe, a subject about which there is little information. Logic dictates the assumption that the European communities were then connected primarily with the Jerusalem center, for the Jews of western Europe were mainly the descendants of the Jews of the Roman empire, who for generations were connected to the Sanhedrin in Palestine and followed the Palestinian customs. Nevertheless, we may assume that after the Arab conquests when the Islamic world developed and eradicated the former borders between east and west (i.e., Persia and Byzantium), new ties developed between the western European communities and the Babylonian center. It appears that commercial ties between the

¹³¹ See TS Loan 103, in: Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 54, 61; Harkavy, *Resp.*, 94; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 489; Gil, *Hist.*, 27. "The Jewish priests of Tiberias"; *ibid.*, 496, and see more references there, note 3. See on Yemen: Assaf, *Ha-kinnūs ha-ol.*, 1951/2, 390-394; Goitein, *Ha-tēmānīm*, 20-25, 54, 74; the letters of Sherira Gaon: 28; Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5), 15f., assumed that two *alūfīm* were meant there, Yedidiah and Nethanel, each of them being the father of two sons named Sar Shālōm and Ḥayyim. Tarj: 28, c, lines 6ff.; see Yāqūt, I, 835; Tarj belongs today to Saudi Arabia. Ṣa'da, see 28, c, lines 23ff.; Yāqūt, *ibid.*, III, 389: a big city and a center of trade, merchants from all places arrive there, and it has a large leather industry. Hīla: 28, b, line 13; see Yāqūt, *ibid.*, II, 191, s.v. حایل, a valley in the land of Yamāma; apparently, this is what the gaon meant, since he mentions Yamāma in his letters. As to the monies, apparently dirhams of eight in a dinar are meant, see Harkavy, *Resp.*, (AD 992): "*ha-kesāfīm al-thumniyya* (eighths?) which we now receive from Yemen, each *zūz* of them is worth one eighth of our Babylonian coins"; cf. Goitein, *Ha-tēmānīm*, 20; cf. the discussion on these letters, in Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5), 15f. Tabāla, see 148, lines 9, 10; see the *Atlas* of Cornu, 86; Ben-Sasson, *Pe'amim*, 18 (1984), 17 n. 60, assumed that the version should be Tabalbala, which is on the border of the Sahara Desert; however it explicitly says: Tabāla, and we have to accept that we do not know how did monies from Yemen arrive to Qayrawān, of all places; it might have been through a caravan of Maghribi Muslim pilgrims returning home from the Arab Peninsula.

Jews of the Persian empire (i.e., the Babylonian Jews) and their brethren in the far west existed before Islam as well—if we accept that the core of information about the Rādhānite Jewish merchants in Ibn Khurdādhbih, stems from a pre-Islamic Syriac source (below, sec. 347). In this case the silence of the sources is certainly no proof, and we may assume that in this early period there were also ties in the area of halachic matters between the Jews of those remote countries and the Babylonian center. The commercial ties maintained by the merchants of Babylonia and Persia, the Rādhānites and the like, with the European countries certainly served as the major channel of communication between the Babylonian yeshivot and the European communities. The ability of the Jews to link east and west was famous, not for naught did the stories in the western chronicles about Charlemagne's ties with Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd give prominence to the Jewish emissary, Isaac Iudaeus. The author of the book *yūḥasīn* cites the *sefer qabbālat ḥasīd*, relating a tradition that: "King Qrlwsh' (= Carolus) was looking for a wise man of the tribe of Judah, 'of the seed of kingship' and Makhīr was sent to him" (from Babylonia? so it would appear). This may be contrived, influenced by Christian tradition, yet the possibility that it echoes an original Jewish tradition should not be discounted.

Highly characteristic is what Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph, leader of the Maghribis in Egypt, wrote, apparently in 1064, in a personal letter to a relative, about the intention of the relative's son to travel to Europe, to Germany, apparently. The Jews, there, he writes, are cruel and base and estrange themselves from Jews arriving there from a foreign land. They maintain the *ḥerem ha-yishshūv* (ban on newcomers) whereby they disallow strangers to settle in their midst. Their halachic knowledge is paltry, and learning to them unbecoming. This was written when those far away communities already had some leading luminaries who would be well-respected by future generations in all the Jewish diasporas, yet their fame, it would appear, had yet to reach Egypt. The writer was not only expressing his personal opinion, but what was accepted among Egyptian Jews, and also—we may assume—the Jews in the entire Muslim world.

The information about the *halākhōt* of R. Yehudai b. Naḥmān (Sura, 757-761) becoming known in Babylonia only a year after his death, through Jewish captives brought there from the Christian countries, is interesting. We cannot know who those captives were, or their precise country of origin. There is information about a captive redemption agreement drawn up between Byzantium and Baghdad during the reign of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, in 241 (855/6). It is about the return of Muslim captives held by the Byzantines, yet it should be assumed that captives from Christian lands were held by Muslims, and there may also have been Jewish captives (merchants?) among them. A captive exchange agreement was also drawn up five years later.

One may suggest a number of geographical divisions concerning the ties with the Babylonian center and the Jews of the Muslim world, in general, with Europe. One may, of course, speak of 'Ashkenaz', and the term—until about the eleventh century and also later—would include the communities of France and those of the Rhineland, but also those of northern Italy. Southern Italy was a separate area, with weakening Byzantine control. There was 'Rūm', and if it was mentioned, there is no absolute certainty

that the intention of the writer (usually the gaon) was to Rome itself, or whether it was an Arabic literary term referring to Byzantium, or virtually all of Christian Europe. "The Land of the Franks", may be France, but also northern Italy, and in the language of the time: *Firanja*, and any of its derivative names; here, too, it might also refer to any Christian country. As for Aspāmiya, the reference, as noted above, is usually to that part of Spain already under Christian rule. Then, of course, there was 'Byzantium', which might also refer, as noted, to Rome, but also to Greece. Furthermore, all of them together could also be called Edom.¹³²

(133) As to Ashkenaz, there is information about the ties of the geonim Sherira and Hayy with Meshullam b. Kalonymos. It has been speculated that Moses 'the Elder' came to Mainz from northern Italy; Abū Aaron—whom we shall discuss below (sec. 135)—came to northern Italy, where that Moses learned from him "the secret ways" and brought them to Mainz. It was said of Meshullam b. Kalonymos, that he was a student of the *paytān* Solomon the Babylonian (see below, sec. 242). It was also said of Moses b. Kalonymos (the source has: Ankolonymos) that he had come "from the city of Lūka which is in the land of Firanja" (stated in *Geonica*).

There was much discussion about the information in the Maharshal (Solomon Luria) responsa about the family ties between Elijah the Elder (b. Menahem), author of the *Azhārōt*, who hailed from Le Mans, and Hayy Gaon, information that also emphasizes the ties between the scholars of Ashkenaz, in general, and Hayy Gaon: "...and our Master Gershom *me'or ha-gōlā* (Light of the Diaspora) received from R. Hayy.... and Rashi passed it on to our Master Elijah the Elder, author of the *Azhārōt*, husband of R. Hayy Gaon's sister and brother of our Master Jekuthiel; also R. Jekuthiel received from R. Hayy Gaon". There is collateral information about a responsum sent from Qayrawān "by (apparently it should be: to; or the reference is to a query, not a responsum) Elijah the Elder". We know very well that Qayrawān, in the first half of the eleventh century, was the major western center of the ties with Babylonia, through which queries were sent and responsa received. As early as 1865, Zunz cast doubts about the information concerning the family ties between Hayy Gaon and Elijah the Elder: *sehr wenig wahrscheinlich*. Elijah's brother, Isaac, from Orléans, who is

¹³² See Gil, *History*, 548f., where I pointed out the scarcity of sources pertaining to the relations with Eutrope, the main source being the responsum of the Jerusalem gaon, Elijah ha-Kohen b. Solomon, to Meshullam b. Moses of Mainz. See *ibid.*, 285ff., on the matters of Charlemagne; see the *Yuhasin*, 84; Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 206. See the letter of Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph (*ha-rāv*) in: Gil, *Palestine*, III, 329f. (no. 530); on the *halākhōt* of Yehudai Gaon see Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, *Or z.*, II, 177 (no. 432): "know ye that those *halākhōt* of our Lord and Master Yehudai, the righteous of blessed memory, were not known by me in Babylonia in the days of our Master Yehudai, only some hundred years after him were they brought to Babylonia by some captives", etc. See the version of the *Yuhasin* (Zakuto), 205f.: "our Master Hayy disputed the *halākhōt* of our Master Yehudai Gaon.... or perhaps somebody else wrote it and ascribed it to him, some hundred years after (probably: captives arrived) from Edom (i.e., Christian Europe) to Babylonia". See also Epstein, *Hagoren*, 3 (1901/2), 64; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 461; *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 292ff., and see *ibid.*, 295, his arguments against the opinion of Aptowitzer. Details on captives, see: Tabari, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1426ff., 1439; cf. Eppenstein, *Beiträge*, 185 n. 2, who assumed that those captives were from the south of Italy, captured during the *razzias* of the Muslims in that area in the mid-ninth century, as the term Edom—he assumed—was applied by Hayy Gaon to Rome and Italy, whereas it is *yāwān* (Greece) that he used for Byzantium.

mentioned five times in Rashi's Talmud commentary, was a student of Eliezer the Great, and the teacher of Eleazar b. Judah, who flourished towards the end of the eleventh century. B. M. Lewin rejected Zunz's doubts. He noted, in his book on Sherira Gaon, that Sherira's daughter had married Elijah the Elder. Alexander Marx, on the other hand, also doubted the story. Today, it would seem, no one any longer doubts the historical value of the information. So it should be, especially because of the fact, as Fleischer has shown, that Elijah the Elder held the title of *alūf*, clearly a title granted by the Babylonian yeshivot.¹³³

(134) Even though there is no direct information about the ties of the Babylonian yeshivot and southern France, it appears that such ties did indeed exist. According to Benedikt, the Babylonian yeshivot were clearly influential in the traditions of the center of learning in Provence. Narbonne was a large Jewish center in ancient times, as was Marseilles. When an unidentified ship (a Norman pirate ship, as it turned out) appeared in the sea off Narbonne, the residents first thought that it belonged to Jewish merchants. It appears that there is corresponding evidence in Ibn Khurdādhbih, about the activity in western Europe (Firanja) of the Babylonian Rādhānite Jewish merchants, and it seems likely that ties of Torah and halacha were maintained alongside the commercial ties, between those communities and the yeshivot in Babylonia.

There is more direct evidence regarding Lombardy. This has been preserved in two manuscripts, in London and Oxford. The subject is the scholars of "Siponto and the kingdom of Lombardy": Judah (Leon) b. Elhanan b. Judah, Menahem ha-Kohen and others (whose names are not mentioned) about whom it states that they had studied in Hayy Gaon's yeshiva (i.e., Pumbedita) and others who were affiliated with the *bēt midrāsh* (of Judah b. Elhanan) and who may also have been students of Hayy Gaon: Elhanan, °Anan ha-Kohen (b. Marinus), Melkizedek and Moses ha-Kohen. However, the fact is that Siponto is in northern Apulia on the Adriatic coast.¹³⁴

¹³³ See Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 55ff. who listed 15 queries; Rapoport, *Kerem ḥemed*, 6 (1840/41), 23. On the *piyyūt* see Epstein, *REJ*, 27 (1893), 89. Ginzberg, *ibid.*, assumed that the name Anqolinimos, judging by the prefix *an*, probably proved that he was from Provence. I looked up the manuscript, TS Loan 90, and it says there *mi-medīnat lwba* (or: *alwbbh*); therefore the idea about the origin from Lucca in Lombardy is doubtful. True, the author of *ha-Roqeah*, Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, also located the Kalonymos family in Lucca (see below), but he might also have taken it from an erroneous version. If it was Lucca indeed, its being ascribed to Firanja does not contradict it, as in the Arab contemporary sources, as also in the geonic ones, Firanja meant not only France, but other areas which had previously been under Frankish rule as well; this was already noticed by Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 55, and Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 42, and see below, sec. 349. See Rapoport, in his introduction to *Teshūvot geon. qadm.* (Cassel), no. 118, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 487. See the *Responsa* of Solomon Luria, 84 (no. 29); Assaf, *Mi-sifrūt ha-g.*, 222, 228 line 38; cf. Gross, *Gallia Judaica*, 363; Zunz, *Literaturgeschichte*, 126f.; Lewin, *Rav Sherira*, 25; Marx, *JJLP*, I (1919), 400; Grossman, *Ḥakhmē ashk.*, 87, 89 n. 44; Fleischer, *Qōves*, NS 11, 64: in a fragment of the *azhārōt* there is the signature *alūf*; *ibid.*, 59: *piyyūfīm* ascribed to Elijah the Elder, and 66 n. 16. On Isaac b. Menahem of Orléans, see Gross, *ibid.*, 32f. In my article on this subject, in *Simonsohn Jub. Vol.*, 47, there is an error: it says there on Isaac b. Menahem that he was the teacher of Eleazar b. Judah; this Eleazar belonged to the eleventh century, and could not have been the author of *Sefer ha-roqeah*, as stated there.

¹³⁴ See Benedikt, *Merkaz*, 2ff. The sources mentioned by him belong to the twelfth century and are too late for the present discussion; see, following him, Grossman, *Zion*, 50 (1984/5), p. 214. On Narbonne and Marseilles, and proofs of their numerical importance and

(135) Special ties apparently existed between Babylonia and southern Italy. The ancient communities in this country were still subject to Byzantine rule, and undoubtedly suffered from the raids of Muslim navies. A semi-legendary liturgical poem that preserves evidence of this connection, is the *Scroll of aḥīmāʿaš*, which speaks of the Baghdadian Abū Aaron and his activities in southern Italy. With this information, in which there is certainly a core of historical truth, Rapoport has already connected the statements of Eleazar b. Judah, of Worms, author of *ha-Rokeaḥ*, that he received the secrets of the prayers from Judah he-Ḥāsid, who received them from R. Eleazar (b. Meshullam), the Speyer cantor, who received them from our Master Kalonymos the Elder, who received them from his father our Master Isaac, who received them from his father our Master Eliezer the Great (Eliezer b. Isaac of Worms), who received them from our Master Simeon the Great, who had learned them from a number of teachers going back to our Master Moses the Elder who received them from his father(!) Aaron. Here Rapoport noted that Moses father's name was Kalonymos, thus there is a distortion here, to wit: from Abū Aaron, of whom it is said in the continuation that he was the son of R. Samuel the *nāsī* who had left Babylonia, and after much wandering reached Lucca, in Lombardy, where he encountered R. Moses author of the *piyyūṭ ʿĒmat nōre ʿōtekhā*, "in awe of your wondrous power". As to Samuel the *nāsī*, it appears that he was a descendant of the exilarchs, for it was they, in that period, who carried the title of *nāsī*, and we have no way of establishing his precise identity. On the other hand, as in the responsum of Solomon Luria that I have referred to above, here, too, there is information regarding the ties between the Kalonymos family and Babylonia; however, in this case it apparently concerns the exilarchic dynasty and not the Pumbedita yeshiva. It even appears that Abū Aaron b. Samuel the *nāsī* preceded Hayy Gaon by some generations.

On the other hand, we rather have evidence of the absence of ties of southern Italy with Babylonia, or the paucity of such ties, from the *Book of Tradition* story of the four captives, whose origins were in southern Italy. Unlike the views of some students, I contend that the major elements of the story are true (above, sec. 122). Hayy Gaon's letter of 11 August 1006, to Qayrawān, to Jacob b. Nissim, apparently, is also evidence of the scarcity of ties. The gaon writes that a rumor had reached him about Ḥushiel and his great scholarship, as though he had never before heard of him, and he asks that he contact the yeshiva (above, *ibidem*).

We do have information about the ties with Rome from the time of Sar Shālōm Gaon (towards the mid-ninth century) in a paragraph in the geonic responsa *Shaʿarē Dūra*, about "... the people of Rome who answered R. Sar Shālōm Gaon" (or answered in the name of Sar Shālōm Gaon; the issue at hand being milking by gentiles on the Sabbath). About Isaac b. Judah, one of Rashi's teachers, it is stated in the *Mordekhai* (the collection of traditions of Mordecai b. Hillel ha-Kohen) that he received a tradition from

their richness, see S. Gregorii Magni *epistolae*, MPL, 77.510, 877, 970f. (book 1, no. 47; 7, no. 24; 9, no. 36). On the ship, see Monachi Sangallensis *gesta Karoli*, I, MGH, SS, II, 757. On the scholars of Siponto and Lombardy, see MS Bodl Cat. 1101, fol. 184a, ed. Neubauer, *Ha-magid*, 18 (1874); Grossberg, *Sefer ha-ʿašāmīm*, 46; cf. Aptowitz, *HUCA*, 8-9 (1931/2), 346 n. 36 (who cites MS BM Or 1054, but this shelf-mark belongs in Grossberg's book to another text); Grossman, *Zion*, 50 (1984/5), 207 n. 54.

the mouth of (should certainly be: in the name of) R. Hayy in Rome, that on the Sabbath one sleeps later in the morning.

We have no explicit testimony about the ties between Byzantium proper and Greece and the yeshivot in Babylonia, but we do have testimony about students from these areas who went to the Babylonian yeshivot to study, just as was the case—apparently on a large scale—with the Muslim countries subject to Palestinian authority. “Students came from the Land of Edom” (whether this is Byzantium, or perhaps western Europe, we cannot know). “Now we asked the excellent Greek students here present, from Constantinople (about the meaning of the word *anfador*) who told us that it was Greek, as whatever is lost or has no worth or pleasure, is called in the Greek language *anfadi*” (responsum of Mattathias Gaon, Pumbedita, ca. 865). “Students from the Land of Edom” who came (apparently to Baghdad) “who lived in an inn all of whose residents were Jews”, are mentioned in a responsum written, it seems, by Sherira Gaon.

As can be seen, the sources for this subject are very sparse. Yet just as the division between the two worlds, the Christian and the Muslim, could not prevent the flow of material and spiritual values between them, in these specific areas it was far from being severed. The superiority of the Babylonian yeshivot certainly turned them into a drawing focus for many, and excellent, students, whether by having gone there or from exchange of letters. In fact, these ties had to be at the expense of the legitimate authority of the communities of Christian Europe, the Palestinian yeshiva. The world of the “Land of Edom” was different from that of Babylonia, not for naught did Hayy Gaon write bitterly about “some of the scholars of Palestine and the scholars of the Land of Edom” (who believe in magic and conjure with God’s name), and about “men of Rome and Palestine”. Indeed, Palestine still had great influence in Europe, even in the mid-eleventh century, when the Rhineland communities refer a query there about *sirkha de-libba* (an adhesion of the lungs of a slaughtered animal to the chest) and the coming of the Messiah.

The sources that I surveyed above (to the best of my knowledge, these are the only sources on this subject, i.e., sources that are more or less contemporary) tell us that the prestige of the Babylonian yeshivot was known in Europe, and letters and responsa from the Babylonian geonim were arriving there. Yet it appears that actual community ties were mainly maintained with the Palestinian yeshiva. At the end of the tenth century, and in the first half of the eleventh century, change took place in this matter. The outstanding among European youth set forth for Pumbedita, to Sherira, then to Hayy, to study Torah directly from them, and for them Babylonia became the source of authority. Evidence is in the statement of Rabbēnū Tam: “The custom of our Master Hayy was accepted by our Master Gershon Light of the Exile and our Masters in Bari and Lotharingia, and our Master Solomon acted according to them” etc.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ See a comprehensive article on the details in the *megillat aḥimāʿaṣ*: Bonfil, *Italia Judaica*, I (1983), 135f., and see the *megillā* itself, 13, 16. On the details in *Sefer ha-roqeaḥ* of Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, see Joseph Delmedigo, *Maṣrēf la-ḥokhmā*, 63f.; Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, I, 65 n. 57; Epstein, *Ha-ḥōqēr*, 2 (1893/4), 8f.; Harkavy, *Ḥadāshim*, 224; Assaf, *Qōvṣ*, NS 11, 63f.; cf. Grossman, *Ḥakhmē Ashk.*, 31, 53 n. 92. A manuscript fragment by Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, ed. Gross, *MGWJ*, 27 (1878), 250, contains an addition saying

that Samuel *ha-nāsī* received a tradition from "our Lord and Master Judah, the chief judge, who received it from our Lord and Master Hayy Gaon", which caused Gross to deny any historical value of this entire fragment. See another version about Simeon: Jellinek, *Bēi ha-midrāsh*, 5, 148 (*ma'asiyōt*, no. 12; about Simeon, father of Elhanan who became a pope, see *ibid.*, no. 11). Probably Simeon b. Isaac b. Avon is meant, the *paytān* from Mainz, of the end of the tenth century; cf. Zunz, *Literaturgesch.*, 111. The letter of al-Tāhīrtī: 125; cf. Goitein, *Finkel Jub. Vol.*, 130f.; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 117; Hayy Gaon on Hushiel: 37; there was an ancient Jewish community in Salerno, as mentioned in Christian sources, see: Ashtor, *Settimane* (Spoleto), 1978 (1980), 422f.; in the eleventh century there were economic ties between the Jewish Maghribi merchants and the port cities of the south of Italy, such as Amalfi (Melef) and Napoli; see for instance the letter of Isma'īl b. Farah, from Alexandria to Joseph b. 'Alī Kohen Fāsi, in which he informs him that a ship from Melef has arrived, carrying linnen fabrics and honey: 494, *b*, line 5; cf. Ashtor, *ibid.*, 424 n. 84; Jewish merchants traded in flax imports from Napoli, see the letter of the Spaniard Isma'īl b. Jacob, from Mahdiyya, to Yusha' b. Nathan in Fustat, complaining that there is no way of obtaining flax from Nāpil (in Arab sources: Nābil; see Ibn Ḥawqal, 202, on its flax): 573, *b*, line 4. Cf. on Rome, Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 488 n. 36; *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 292f.; Weinberg, *Resp. of Sar Shālōm*, 21, 25, 46; Bonfil, *It. Jud.*, I, 142f., and see there the *variae lectiones*; Isaac b. Judah: see the *Mordekhai*, *Shabbāt*, no. 398 (to fol. 80a); cf. Aptowitzer, *HUCA*, 8-9 (1931/2), 435 n. 36. On scholars from the land of Edom see *Resp. ge'ōnē mizr.*, no. 34; Mattathias Gaon: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 105 (no. 225), 489. The inn: see *Resp. ge'ōnē mizr.*, fol. 13 (no. 44; see Müller's note *ibid.*); Judah of Barcelona, *Sefer ha-ittim*, 110; the scholars from Edom: Ashkenazi, *Ta'am zeq.*, 54ff.; Abraham Ibn Da'ūd of Posquières, *Temīm de'im*, 19aff. (no. 119). The communities of the Rhine: Gil, *History*, 498. Rabbēnū Tam, *Sefer ha-yāshār*, 83; Urbach, *Ba'alē ha-tos.*, 75.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTROVERSIES IN THE TENTH CENTURY

1. *The ancient controversies*

(136) Elsewhere, I have discussed the basic features of the controversy phenomenon, a kind of basso continuo in the Jewish community in all stages of its development. Along with its negative aspects, I have also sought to view the controversy as an expression of the vitality of the community organization and the great importance the people of those generations attributed to their status in the community. These characteristics were expressed in an exceptionally fierce and extreme manner in the struggles of the general institutional leadership of the diasporas—the exilarchic dynasty and the yeshivot of Palestine and Babylonia. Information exists about the ancient controversies over the exilarchy, especially in the first quarter of the ninth century. But even for the previous century, information about the controversies in the Babylonian yeshivot has been preserved in the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon. We may assume that the few words the gaon dedicates to the controversy are not testimony to its insignificance, and that a real storm raged. In 729—while the Damascene Umayyad dynasty still reigned in Babylonia—a harsh controversy erupted between the gaon of Pumbedita, Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah (known as Bar Yanqā), and a faction of yeshiva members. According to the *Letter*, the controversy broke out because the gaon harshly tyrannized the yeshiva scholars while he had family ties with the exilarchic dynasty. Some of the scholars left (it should be assumed) for Sura, and returned to Pumbedita only after R. Naṭrūnai's death.

About a generation later, perhaps shortly after the Abbasid uprising, a controversy broke out around R. Aḥa of Shabḥā. As we have seen (above, sec. 78), the substance of the controversy is not clear, but it was certainly an affair that embroiled Babylonia and all the diasporas.

Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, also tells us about another controversy that broke out in the Pumbedita yeshiva around Abraham b. Sherira. Abraham, from Qābis in the Maghrib (above, sec. 116), became gaon in 816, a position he filled for twelve years, i.e., until 828. In the wake of the controversy between David b. Judah and Daniel b. Saul b. °Anan, ending with David's victory, there was a movement to depose Abraham b. Sherira, and he was replaced by Joseph b. Ḥiyyā. In Sherira Gaon's words: "During the controversy of the *nesī'im* Daniel and David b. Judah, our Lord and Master Joseph (his father's name, Ḥiyyā, he mentioned before) was appointed as gaon". It appears that Abraham b. Sherira was deposed because he supported the losing side—that of Daniel—i.e., the house of °Anan, and, as we know, Pumbedita, unlike Sura, sought to be free of any

of the taint (above, sec. 100). The assumed time of the controversy between David and Daniel over the exilarchy, is 825, and it should be assumed that in the same, or following, year these events transpired at the Pumbedita yeshiva. The ferocity of the controversy and the balanced strength of the sides that faced off against each other, can be seen in the compromise they reached at the beginning, whereby each of them would be considered geonim. The public in Baghdad was shaken, for when both of them attended the synagogue the prayer leader declared: "Hearken you to what the *heads* of the yeshiva have in mind to say; and all of Israel started weeping" for they had never heard anything of the like. Therefore, Jacob b. Ḥiyyā gave up and reverted to being chief judge of the Court, the position he held before the controversy. He became the gaon of Pumbedita after Abraham b. Sherira's death in 828, a position he held until his death six years later (about this controversy see also below, sec. 190).

After Joseph b. Ḥiyyā's death, in 833, the then-chief judge of the Court, Joseph b. Abbā, was suitable to be appointed gaon, for according to Sherira Gaon (this Joseph was a paternal relative of his) "he was a great scholar". But the exilarch, David b. Judah, thought otherwise, preferring Isaac b. Hūnā (or b. Ḥananiah) for the position. We cannot know whether a full-blown controversy broke out then. Sherira Gaon relates that the new gaon placated Joseph b. Abbā with friendly words, by comparing the two of them to Rabba and R. Joseph, each of whom "said to the other, you rule".

The ensuing controversy took place in 858, between Menahem b. Joseph b. Ḥiyyā, and Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay (or b. Rabbi). According to Sherira Gaon "the choice of the scholars" sided with Menahem (this is the way he expressed himself also in regard to R. Mevasser Gaon's faction that I will be discussing here below, and also in sec. 199). Menahem died in 860, at which time the controversy ended and the factions dispersed, and all the scholars of Pumbedita accepted Mattathias' gaonate.

Sherira Gaon, himself a Pumbeditan, was knowledgeable about Pumbedita's controversies, but not about those of Sura. His statement "there occurred controversies the information on which is unreliable", means that he did not rely on the details given to him about the controversies in Sura. However, we know from another source, that in the first half of the ninth century there was much commotion in Sura over the existence of a strong faction that supported the house of ʿAnan. Sherira Gaon made the above comment near where he noted the gaonate of Qīmoi b. Ashī, apparently 816-820, and it appears that the information that Sherira Gaon considered unreliable also dealt with the period of the conflict between David and Daniel over the exilarchy, in other words, the affair of the struggle against the house of ʿAnan. A controversy to which Sherira Gaon could only devote a few words (who can know what storms lay behind them), was that between Naṭrūnai b. Hillai and ʿAmram b. Sheshnā: ʿAmram b. Sheshnā had risen against Naṭrūnai b. Hillai and was accorded recognition (by a faction?) as a vying gaon until he gave in, and he became gaon again only after Naṭrūnai's death (the period of the two apparently lasted from 853 to 871).¹³⁶

¹³⁶ See on the matter of the disputes: Gil, *History*, 511-516; Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah: Sherira, *Letter*, 102f., what the editor, Lewin, calls "the French version", which is more

2. *Pumbedita—^oUqba—David b. Zakkai*

(137) After describing the controversy in Pumbedita between Menahem and Mattathias, that was over, as stated above, in 860, and the gaonate of ^oAmram b. Sheshnā in Sura after the death of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, Sherira's silence implies that the affairs of the Babylonian leadership proceeded peacefully. The peaceful situation lasted until the death of Sherira's grandfather, Judah Gaon b. Samuel, in February 917, in other words a period of nearly sixty years—more than two generations. Then a controversy erupted regarding the Pumbedita gaonate, because the yeshiva's scholars appointed as gaon Mevasser ha-Kohen b. Qīmoi, while the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, appointed a gaon from a different priestly family, Šādōq b. Joseph. This controversy, according to Sherira, lasted until "Elul of the year 233", i.e., Sel. 1233, about the end of August 922. An illusory truce was achieved, whereby both of them would have the status of gaon; David b. Zakkai having recognized the status of Mevasser ha-Kohen b. Qīmoi. Each one of the factions in the yeshiva stayed on independently, 'the choice' of the Pumbedita scholars belonging to Mevasser's faction. This state of affairs was maintained until the death of Mevasser, in Kislev Sel. 1234, November or December 922 (Kislev, in that year, began on 24 November 922; see sec. 142, below, on this issue). When speaking of 'the choice' among the Pumbedita scholars who supported Mevasser, Sherira certainly meant his own antecedents, i.e., his father Ḥananiah, and others on his father's side, and those of his father's mother, descendants of Palṭoi b. Abayē, and of his son, Isaac Šemāḥ.

Were those years really as peaceful as Sherira writes (or as it appears from his silence)? Not according to Nathan ha-Kohen b. Isaac the Babylonian's "History of Baghdad". He told his listeners in Qayrawān about a fierce controversy that had erupted between the yeshiva of Pumbedita and the exilarch, ^oUqba. He spoke about the controversy right after a short survey of the way the monies for Sura and Pumbedita were divided. According to him, Sura would receive two thirds of the funds sent to the Babylonian yeshivot (it is implied that the senders did not earmark the yeshiva to which those monies should be sent), whereas Pumbedita received a third. In Nathan's statements, it is implied that the "yeshiva scholars" in Pumbedita quarreled among themselves because they did not have enough money, therefore, the "great of the generation" gathered and decided that the funds should be "divided equally". Nathan the Babylonian always lauded Sura over Pumbedita, and it appears that he himself was a Sura man, perhaps this is why, when comparing the yeshivot, he considered the quarrels in Pumbedita to be the cause of Sura's superiority.

Nathan then goes on to describe the fierce controversy between ^oUqba the exilarch and the Pumbedita yeshiva. Nathan's Qayrawān audience knew of ^oUqba: ^oUqba, of the House of David (*al-da'ūdī*), who at one time came

reliable, as proven by the Geniza fragments. The dispute between Abraham b. Sherira and Joseph b. Ḥiyyā: *ibid.*, 110f; Joseph b. Abbā and Isaac b. Hūnā, *ibid.*, 112; see the story about Rabba and Rav Joseph, *ibid.*, 85; Menahem and Mattathias: *ibid.*, 113; the disputes in Sura: *ibid.*, 115; the commotion in Sura: 4.

to Ifrīqiyā, i.e., the area of present day Tunisia, whose capital at the time was Qayrawān. In fact, we learn about ʿUqba’s arrival in Qayrawān from Abraham b. Nathan ha-Yarḥī’s *Sefer ha-manhig*: “It was the custom in Qayrawān that a seat of honor in the synagogue next to the Torah Ark be given to Master ʿUqba the *nāsī*, and after the Kohen and the Levi read their sections of the Torah, the Torah would be brought over to him”. Further down we shall see why he came to Qayrawān. That controversy between the exilarch ʿUqba and the Pumbedita yeshiva broke out over money, i.e., the monies for the *rāshūt* from Khurāsān. Khurāsān in the past had belonged to the authority of Pumbedita, and it was Pumbedita that appointed the judges and received the money from there. ʿUqba, however, wanted to transfer the appointments and the monies to the hands of the exilarchy. (See below, sec. 296; Khurāsān had, in fact, belonged to the Pumbedita authority.) The Pumbedita yeshiva’s staunch supporters were moneyed Baghdadis headed by Joseph b. Pinḥās, his son-in-law Neṭīrā, and other prominent members of the Baghdad community. It was they who applied pressure on the rulers and caused the exile of ʿUqba from Baghdad to a place called Qarmīsīn (which is Kirmānshāh), five days east of Baghdad, near the Khurāsān road. Some months later the caliph (“*al-sulṭān* from Baghdad”; when Nathan employs this term he means the caliph) also arrived there. (From here on the controversies are closely linked to the Baghdadi financiers, the family of Joseph b. Pinḥās and Neṭīrā, and the family of Aaron b. ʿAmram; see details about them below, sec. 363ff.)¹³⁷

(138) Here Nathan starts elaborating, explaining to his listeners what the caliph saw when he arrived at Qarmīsīn: it is an interesting area because of its mountains, flowing water and fruit, and saffron cultivation (noting that all of Baghdad’s saffron was grown there), and most important, it is about half a mile from a place called Shafarān where there is a palace on pillars two stories tall and statues, one of Kisrā (the Persian king) and the other of his beloved Shīrīn, below which there was a sculpture of a horse, and water flowing from a hole in a bench (?), entering the horse’s mouth and exiting by its tail. It appears that these details were famous in the narrator’s time, yet Nathan may have known about them from one of the contemporary Arabic writers who indeed describe the wonders of the “*qasr* (palace) of Shīrīn”. It appears that not long after Nathan the Babylonian told his story,

¹³⁷ The dispute between Mevasser and Kohen Sedeq: Sherira, *Letter*, 119f.; the dispute of ʿUqba: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 78f.; cf. the Judeo-Arabic original: 12, II, a, lines 19-22, where Nathan the Babylonian points out that in case the senders of the queries did not specify to which of the two yeshivot the queries and the monies were meant, Sura would receive two thirds and Pumbedita a third; but if the name of the yeshiva was known, the monies would go to that one; see *ibid.*, I, the parallel Arabic version and the matter of the ʿUqba dispute. See Abraham b. Nathan (ʿBN) ha-Yarḥī, *Sefer ha-manhig* (Raphael), 182, and the references there regarding “the custom that was in Qayrawān”, and cf. Neubauer, *ibid.*, 84, about the status of the exilarch in Baghdad: the *ḥazzān* “takes out the Torah scroll, and then a Kohen recites and after him a Levite; then the *ḥazzān* of the synagogue hands the Torah over down to the exilarch while the whole community rises, and he receives it and stands reciting it”, etc.; cf. Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 219; Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 149 n. 4. Nathan the Babylonian, when saying *sulṭān*, meant the caliph: 11, I, a, line 3; b, lines 1, 15; II, a, line 10: *al-sulṭān*, whereas in line 11 and also in b, he has: *al-Muṭṭaqid*.

Qaṣr Shīrīn was split by a bolt of lightning and destroyed in AH 345 (the beginning of April 956).¹³⁸

(139) Nathan continues to narrate how the caliph rode to Qaṣr Shīrīn (so it appears) every day, and ʿUqba would address him with pleasing blessings. In the Hebrew version of Nathan's account: "He would bless him with pleasant words and fine poems", but in the original version there is no mention of poems, only *al-duʿā' lahu*. The term *duʿā'* noted a unique aspect of the Arabic culture of communication, a precise protocol of the manner of approaching holders of status according to their rank. This protocol was one of the things that were unique in the profession of the writers and secretaries who were government officials, the *kuttāb* (singular, *kātib*). This was the essence of ʿUqba's talent and the secret of his success—every day he devised marvelous and novel formulae, and throughout an entire year did not repeat a formula even once. This made a mighty impression on the caliph's *kātib*, who made an effort to memorize them (or, as implied, to write them down). Then the inevitable happened: the *kātib* told the caliph how impressed he was, and the caliph eventually granted ʿUqba a *siḡill* (seal, i.e., an official order) returning him to his residence and position of exilarch. However, Neṭīrā and his father-in-law, Joseph b. Pinḥās, and their entire faction did not acquiesce, and after they applied pressure ʿUqba was again forced into exile. Now, however, he had to leave the main area of the caliphate for he was banned from entering Baghdad, nor was he allowed to

¹³⁸ Qaṣr Shīrīn: from among the early sources, the first seems to be Ibn Rusta, 164, 166; Ibn Rusta was a Persian (from Iṣfahān), and wrote around 900; perhaps he and his contemporary al-Jayhānī, a Persian from Khurāsān, whose book is not preserved (see C. Pellat in *Et*²—Supplement, s.v. al-Djayhānī) might have used a common source, or it is Ibn Rusta who copied from al-Jayhānī. He writes that at a distance of four parasangs (not half a mile as in Nathan's report) from Qarmāshīn(!) one finds Shībdīz, which is an arch carved (*manqūr*; Nathan: *manqūb*) in the mountain, and there stand two statues, a man and a woman, and the woman is Shīrīn. Beneath it there is another statue (of a man), under which there is a spring whose water would suffice to operate a mill; on one side there are 250 steps hewn in the rock. Further down, on p. 270, he explains that Shīrīn was the wife of Khusraw (Kisrā). One generation later, Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, II, 215, knows that Shībdār (not Shībdīz as in Ibn Rusta and others) was the horse of Kisrā Abarwīz (Peroses: 590-628), and it is its statue which one finds in Qarmāsīn. This is the horse on which the king of Persia fled during the rebellion of Bahrām Cūbīn. After Ibn Rusta we also find Abū Dulaf (Minorsky), 14 with a miraculous story of a man who built a house planned with the help of architects; and in excavations made in AH 340 (950), one discovered a house which corresponded exactly to that plan. That house was built by Shībdīz, whose statue is at a distance of one parasang from Qarmīsīn, riding a horse hewn in the rock; and again he explains that in fact Shībdīz is the horse, whereas the man is Barwīz (=Abarwīz, king of Persia), and water flows from beneath its legs. Yāqūt copied this story: *Buldān*, III, 250 (s.v. Shībdīz); IV, 69 (s.v. Qarmīsīn). Ibn Hawqāl, who wrote in the 980s, calls the town which Nathan calls Shafarān, Sāsāniyān, see his *Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, I, 256. Obviously, Nathan is the one who is right, and Shafarān is but *zaʿfarān*, saffron, that area being, as Nathan specified, the main center where it is grown, as said above. Qaṣr Shīrīn hit by a thunder: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XI, 230; see al-Munshī al-Baghdādī, 40f. (wrote in 1822): Qaṣr Shīrīn is at five parasangs from Khāniqīn and there is an ancient inn (*khān*) on the bank of River Wand (probably the Nahrwān canal is meant). The old fortress is called Jalūla and is in ruins. See also Le Strange, *Lands*, 63, who writes also about Kirmanshāh, on p. 187, and see the map opposite p. 185. It appears that the distance between Qarmīsīn and Qaṣr Shīrīn is greater than said in the sources; it is about 150 kms. Qaṣr Shīrīn is *ʿimārat khusraw*, or *khāj qafasī*. By the ruins one sees that it was an inhabited palace, built on rectilinear surfaces, a kind of mountain terraces, surrounded by access spaces on both sides; it measured 372 on 190 meters. See illustrations and an imagined reconstruction: Reuther, in Pope (ed.), *Survey*, 539ff.

remain in any of the eastern districts. Therefore, he decided to go westwards. If we remove the legendary-imaginary integument, the core of the story is that the two factions won supporters among the high officials of the caliphate and, in the end, the moneyed faction, Pumbedita supporters, triumphed over the faction of ʿUqba, the exilarch. ʿUqba indeed went into exile in the Maghrib, as was well-known to the Qayrawānites who listened to Nathan's story. About three-four years later (according to the Arabic original) there was no one "in the *rāshūt* (*al-riyāsa*)" i.e., in the position of exilarch. This was a difficult situation for the Jewish nation to bear, and they persuaded David b. Zakkai, ʿUqba's cousin, to assume the exilarchy. However, Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph, gaon of Pumbedita, refused to appoint him because he feared that the story of ʿUqba would be repeated. Therefore, ʿAmram b. Solomon, gaon of Sura, while in Baghdad, appointed him and informed his yeshiva ("the *benē bē rāv*, [i.e., the scholars of the yeshiva], the *tannā ʿīm*, and the *talmīdīm*, all of them"), who proceeded en masse to Qaṣr—which is Qaṣr Ibn Hubayra, half way between Sura and Baghdad—the seat of David b. Zakkai, blessed him and made a pact with him certifying that he was the exilarch. However, Kohen Šedeq was steadfast in his extreme refusal for three years, until Nissī, *rōsh kallā* the Nahrwānī, succeeded in persuading him to change his position and join in the appointment of David b. Zakkai. Kohen Šedeq and all of the Pumbeditans thus went to meet the exilarch in Ṣarṣar, south of Baghdad, while the exilarch was making his way to Baghdad with many of his followers. Nathan the Babylonian then describes how they accompanied David b. Zakkai to the building (*he-ḥāṣēr*) prepared for him in Baghdad (in *ereṣ ʿatīqā*, which is *shūqā ʿatīqā*; I will be dealing with this below, sec. 283).¹³⁹

(140) Both Sherira Gaon and Nathan the Babylonian, describe events that had apparently taken place, and it seems that they are both dealing with matters that occurred simultaneously: the exilarchs and the Sura and Pumbedita yeshivot are cited in both sources, and fierce controversies were raging at the same time. Nevertheless, there are some differences between them: (1) Sherira Gaon makes no mention of ʿUqba; (2) in Sherira Gaon's account, David b. Zakkai appoints Kohen Šedeq, while in Nathan the Babylonian's it is Kohen Šedeq who is supposed to appoint David b.

¹³⁹ See the continuation of the ʿUqba story, in the original text, 12, I, *a* lines 19ff.; the Hebrew version: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.* II, 79. See Hilāl al-Šābiʿ, *Wuzarāʾ* (Amedroz), 306: al-Muḥassin b. ʿAlī tries to obtain something from the caliph and advises with his father, who advises him to address the caliph with the full elegant formulae, *al-duʿāʾ al-tamm*, and indeed he included in his petition three lines of such formulae. Nissī al-Nahrwānī is described by Nathan the Babylonian (in Neubauer, above in this note) as somebody who performs miracles and opens the locks of the Baghdadī lanes, at night, by using magic formulae—both in the Arabic version and in the Hebrew. See on Nissī (b. Berekhiah) al-Nahrwānī and his poems: Shirmann, *Shīrīm ḥad.*, 23, and in Harkavy, *ha-Sarīd, Zikkārōn la-rish.*, V, 70, a citation from the response of Rav Mevasser ha-Levi on Saadia Gaon: "he (Saadia) said that al-Nahrwānī recited to him a poem in which there is the word *tarīʾ*" (which was overlooked by the gaon in his *egrōn*). Ṣarṣar, see: Ibn Jubayr, 193: it is on the northern bank of a big canal which is a branch of the Euphrates; see the map in Le Strange, *Lands*, 25; it was apparently some 15-20 kms. from Baghdad; Ibn Jubayr: some 30 parasangs (ca. 180 kms.). Nathan the Babylonian: half a day from Babylon (i.e. Baghdad), see the Hebrew version in Neubauer, as above in this note. ʿAmram b. Solomon, gaon of Sura, see 12, I, *a*, lines 12-13, and the Hebrew version in Neubauer, *ibid.*, II, 78; cf. Sherira, *Letter*, 119f.

Zakkai; at first he refuses to do so, yet, in the end acquiesces; (3) Nathan the Babylonian makes no mention of Mevasser Gaon; (4) Sherira Gaon makes no mention of °Amram b. Solomon, nor of Hayy b. Qīmoi, both of them geonim of Sura; (5) Sherira Gaon does not mention Joseph b. Pinḥās and Neṭīrā and their support of Kohen Šedeq, nor their involvement (certainly not their support) in the Pumbedita yeshiva; (6) Sherira Gaon does not mention the time of David b. Zakkai's appointment, which according to Nathan the Babylonian took place three years after °Uqba's final exile; (7) the essence of the controversy, and its roots, in Nathan the Babylonian, is control of the Khurāsān *rāshūt*, while Sherira Gaon describes the controversy between Mevasser Gaon, and Kohen Šedeq and David b. Zakkai; (8) in Sherira Gaon's account there is no involvement of the Sura yeshiva, neither that of Nissī, the Nahrwānī, *rōsh kallā*. If we examine the dates mentioned in the two sources, we see that they apparently relate more or less to an identical time period. Sherira Gaon mentions his grandfather, Judah Gaon, who died in Adar (Adar I?) Sel. 1128, February 917, which was apparently the time when David b. Zakkai appointed Kohen Šedeq; the controversy between Kohen Šedeq and Mevasser lasted until Elul, August 921; Mevasser died in Kislev, Sel. 1234, November or December 922 (Kislev began on 24 November). The dates given by Sherira Gaon are undoubtedly correct, his dating was precise, especially when dealing with his yeshiva, Pumbedita. Therefore, Nathan's dates should be in correlation with Sherira's dates. Thus when Nathan the Babylonian says that the controversy between Pumbedita and °Uqba erupted four years after the appointment of Kohen Šedeq as gaon, it means that it took place in the spring of 921. °Uqba was expelled to Qarmīsīn—it would appear—a short time after the controversy broke out, i.e., still during 921. He was there for one year, according to the story, i.e., until 922. In that same year he regained the exilarchy, and he was expelled—it seems—not long afterwards, in 922 or 923, and David b. Zakkai was accordingly appointed about 925-927 (three or four years after °Uqba's expulsion, as in Nathan the Babylonian's account). Yet these are impossible dates when compared with those of Sherira Gaon. For example, David b. Zakkai appoints Kohen Šedeq in 917, while Nathan the Babylonian has it happen ten years later; the controversy between Kohen Šedeq and Mevasser was over in 921, while in Nathan it was then that the controversy between Pumbedita and °Uqba began, in 921, and °Uqba's expulsion took place. Moreover: when the controversy between °Uqba and Pumbedita erupted, allegedly in 921, the faction of wealthy and prominent Jews of Baghdad, the most notable of whom was Neṭīrā, are said by Nathan to have supported the Pumbedita yeshiva (even afterwards Neṭīrā continued the struggle against °Uqba); but Neṭīrā died in 916 (below, sec. 363). On the one hand, Sherira Gaon deserves our loyalty as concerns chronology. On the other, Nathan the Babylonian certainly did not make up stories, and some of his statements have an advantage over the information in the gaon's *Letter*. He was apparently more knowledgeable about the Sura yeshiva and knew the name of the gaon, °Amram b. Solomon, to whom he ascribes a prominent role in settling the controversy, while Sherira Gaon does not mention him at all, neither does he mention the name of his successor, Hayy b. Qāyōmā. There is no doubt that the °Uqba affair is not a figment of Nathan the

Babylonian's imagination, but an actual event, just as he is trustworthy in his note of the support Joseph b. Pinḥās and his son-in-law Neṭīrā, extended to the Pumbedita yeshiva in its struggle against the exilarch ʿUqba. One should note that Nathan the Babylonian was a contemporary of Neṭīrā's sons, he even mentions their names, Sahl and Isaac. It would appear that he did not actually know Neṭīrā, because Neṭīrā flourished before Nathan's birth, or when he was still a child. In all events, one may not assume that he was not well acquainted with the events of the ʿUqba affair, but related what he had heard in Baghdad. His main error, as shown by Jacob Mann, was in relating the incident to the period of Kohen Šedeq's gaonate (he does not even mention Mevasser), even though it actually occurred at the time of his predecessor, the gaon Judah b. Samuel, who died, as I have already noted, in February 917. The incident happened before the death of Neṭīrā in 916, for, as we saw, according to Nathan the Babylonian, he was involved in the controversy. This fits what we find in one of Hayy Gaon's responsa regarding marital issues, when he mentions the Khurāsān custom of marital consecration via the wedding ring during the feast: "the ruling of our Lord and Master, our great grandfather Judah Gaon, was that the wedding ceremony should not be performed in a different way from that of Babylonia, that is, by a marriage contract, and the signatures of witnesses and the betrothal blessing". We learn there that the custom had existed in Khurāsān "for more than a hundred years", and it indeed suits the time differential between the gaonate of Judah b. Samuel, and that of his grandson, Hayy. Thus there is even more confirmation for Nathan the Babylonian's statement, that Khurāsān had belonged to the Pumbedita authority. If we accept this view, which is the most likely one, and we read Judah, where Nathan the Babylonian writes Kohen Šedeq, and notes that the controversy broke out four years after he became gaon of Pumbedita, we arrive at the year 909, for the beginning of Judah's gaonate was on Rosh Hashana Sel. 1217 (2 September 905). This time determination may also be supported by the details known by Nathan the Babylonian regarding the heads of the Sura yeshiva, if they are the ones that are correct, and not those in the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon. The gaon of Sura, when the controversy between ʿUqba and Pumbedita broke out, was, according to Nathan the Babylonian, ʿAmram b. Solomon, and after his demise until the appointment of Saadia b. Joseph, the gaon in Sura was Hayy b. Qāyōma, "who led the Sura yeshiva until his death, for twenty years". By counting backwards, we find that the outset of Hayy b. Qāyōma's gaonate was twenty years before 928 (thus Nathan the Babylonian, skipping over Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai and his son Yom Ṭov), i.e., in 909, while ʿAmram b. Solomon was, as stated, prior to him, and still alive at the time the controversy broke out. Therefore, the time for the beginning of the controversy had to be before 909; perhaps around 907.

In 909, the Fatimid caliphate was founded in Ifriqiya, thus it was only natural that when ʿUqba was forced out of Baghdad into exile, this is where he went, to Qayrawān, settling there, it should be assumed, at about 911. This city was at that time an important Jewish center, and the community most certainly received him with feelings of affection and honor. It is remarkable that the events occurred near the beginning of the caliphate of al-Muqtadir, when the vizier was ʿAlī Ibn al-Furāt, who had special ties

with Joseph b. Pinḥās. Thus it is no wonder that Neṭīrā, Joseph b. Pinḥās' son-in-law, found a ready ear in the government, all the way up to the caliph. But it appears that there were also some *kuttāb*, scribes and officials, in higher government echelons who sided with ʿUqba, and that it was they who influenced the caliph to return him to Baghdad and restore his position. In the end, however, the friends of Joseph b. Pinḥās and his son-in-law Neṭīrā, gained the upper hand, and ʿUqba was forced into permanent exile. Even though we know of no direct causal link between ʿUqba's exile and the political events of that time, it should be mentioned that it was then that al-Muqtadir issued the order banning the government employment of *dhimmīs* (mentioned above), and also the frequent appointment changes of the viziers created a constant tension in Baghdad that led to mass disruptions and looting. As for ʿUqba, except for the additional information about his stay in Qayrawān that I noted above, we have no further information. Also, he is not mentioned in the lists of exilarchs. There is room for speculation, especially of a general nature, that the arrival of an exilarch was certainly a major event for the Qayrawān Jews. We do not know of any of his descendants, in all events there is no additional information about the existence of *nesī'im* in Qayrawān in the tenth and the eleventh centuries. The Maghribite who nurtured the tradition of rivalry with the heads of the exilarchic dynasty, and who attempted to disqualify it, was, as we know, Ḥushiel b. Elḥanan. It may be that the presence of such *nesī'im* in Qayrawān is what spurred him to spread the story of Bustanai, yet this is only an assumption. This, therefore, is the gist of the story of the exilarch ʿUqba. His time and his circumstances were clarified only from sources in the Geniza, and those who wrote about the affair, and who looked for a way to reconcile the contradictions between Nathan the Babylonian's story and the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon, were groping in the dark, until Jacob Mann, with the aid of the additional sources available to him, succeeded in solving the riddle.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ As against ʿAmram b. Solomon and Hayy b. Qāyōmā in Nathan the Babylonian's account, we find in Sherira's letter: Shalom b. Mishā'el (ca. 904-911) and Jacob b. Naṭrūnai (ca. 911-924). Perhaps in matters of Sura Nathan is more reliable. On the riots in Baghdad, especially after the arrest of ʿAlī Ibn Furāt (AH 299, AD 911/2): al-Dhahabī, *al-Ayn*, MS Bodl Digby Or 15, fol. 97a; as to the lack of information about ʿUqba and his descendants, it is worth mentioning a letter of Nehorai b. Nissim, written in ca. 1045 to Barhūn b. Šālih al-Tāhīrī, in which he sends greetings to Khalfa (apparently of the Tāhīrī's family) asking to congratulate him on his marriage to the daughter of ʿUqba. As the name ʿUqba is not generally found in the letters of the Maghribis in the eleventh century, one may assume that a descendant of the exilarch ʿUqba is meant, bearing his name, after some hundred years have passed since his death. See 242, a, margin right, lines 8-10; there is also mention of a certain Joseph b. Abī ʿUqba, in 179, a, line 11, and of his son Isma'īl, who wrote 214, and is mentioned in more Geniza documents; they seem to belong to the same family. Nathan the Babylonian on the Sura geonim: 12, I, a, line 12; Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 78, 80. Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 278f., 446-449, changed the dispute about the monies of Khurāsān, between Pumbedita and the exilarch, into one between Sura and Pumbedita, as Nathan the Babylonian writes concomitantly on the division of monies between the two yeshivot; Grätz finds here a matter of principle for the Pumbedita geonim, supported by the rich men of Baghdad, in their dispute against the exilarch, and he sought a compromise between the version of Nathan the Babylonian and that of Sherira: Kohen Šedeq refused to recognize David b. Zakkai's appointment, therefore it is David b. Zakkai who appointed Mevasser as gaon instead of Kohen Šedeq; but Mevasser refused to accept this solution. Halevi, *Dōrōt ha-r.*, III, 249 bitterly attacked the view of Grätz ("...although we are already used to the

(141) According to Nathan the Babylonian, three-four years (in the Arabic version) passed between °Uqba's final exile and the appointment of David b. Zakkai as exilarch. Therefore, it is safe to assume that David b. Zakkai's appointment took place in 915, i.e., when Judah b. Samuel, head of the Pumbedita yeshiva, was still alive. Nathan the Babylonian persists in confusing Judah with Kohen Šedeq, just as he does throughout the description of the °Uqba affair; after all, the case of the appointment of David b. Zakkai, and how the head of the Sura yeshiva (apparently Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai) accepted it, and how Nissī al-Nahrwānī also persuaded the Pumbedita gaon to accept the appointment, is, in Nathan's story, a direct continuation of the °Uqba episode. Thus we may conclude, that in February 917, when Judah Gaon b. Samuel died, David b. Zakkai was already exilarch, and he refused to ratify the election of Mevasser ha-Kohen b. Qīmoi as the Pumbedita gaon, and appointed—against the wishes of the (majority of?) the Pumbedita scholars—Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph. The Baghdadi financiers did not adopt a uniform stance in the controversy in Pumbedita that broke out between the two factions, of Mevasser and of Kohen Šedeq, the latter one being favored by the exilarch. In all events, Aaron b. °Amram, the financier, preferred Mevasser. This is rather clearly implied in two letters of the Palestinian gaon, Meir Gaon (or his son, Aaron b. Meir), who wrote, apparently to Mevasser gaon, during the calendar controversy, in 922. The first letter mentions his visit in Baghdad, where he sought the support of the Babylonians in his struggle against the °Anan family. This visit took place in the midst of the Pumbedita controversy,

conjectures of the scholar Grätz who turns the matters upside down, without any investigation, writing only for the sake of pure casuistry [we see that] in this matter he completely gave up any critical approach and all his long argumentation is of no avail"). In his view the dispute of °Uqba was with another Kohen Šedeq, not the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva, but Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai (832-843), while Nathan the Babylonian switched it to the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva; whereas the °Amram b. Solomon in his report is but °Amram b. Sheshnā, in whose time (according to him: about 875) David b. Zakkai was appointed as exilarch; as Nathan the Babylonian was not versed enough in those ancient events, he constructed his own story. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 59ff., intervened in favor of Nathan, trying to disprove Sherira Gaon's version, and showing that in a number of manuscripts of his *Letter* the name David b. Zakkai is omitted. Therefore there is a possibility that he also was referring the dispute to °Uqba (not to David b. Zakkai) and Kohen Šedeq. Ginzberg misunderstood the text, such as by concluding that °Uqba was a cousin of Kohen Šedeq, which provoked the dispute as °Uqba wanted to appoint his relative as gaon of Pumbedita. He even did not refrain from suggesting a number of changes in the text, so as 'to correct' what was allegedly garbled by copyists. Baron, *Saadia Anniv. Vol.*, 30ff., repeats a number of Mann's arguments, without referring to him. Besides, he tries to establish the time of the °Uqba affair basing on a conjectured degree of influence of the Jewish 'bankers' on the ruling individuals, the viziers, and he explains the success of these 'bankers' in the dispute mainly by their status with °Alī Ibn Furāt; however, as we shall see below (secs. 363-366), it is not likely that there occurred any change in this status in the times when °Alī Ibn Furāt did not hold the position of vizier; we have much better evidence on which to establish the supposed time of the curriculum of that affair. See the discussion of Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 148ff. (see *ibid.*, 150 n. 8, his conjecture, which I consider is credible, that by saying *muḥārīm*, "the better ones", Sherira meant "his father Hananiah and other relatives of his"). Hayy Gaon's responsum: Assaf, *Resp.* (1926/7), no. 113; see *Ṣṣar ha-g. to Qiddūshin*, 133 (no. 301). The reports are discussed also by Malter, *Saadia*, 104, who preferred the version of Nathan the Babylonian, on which see the reply of Mann, *ibid.*, 153. H.H. Ben-Sasson, *Perāqīm* (1957/8), 102, still believed that the dispute happened between °Uqba and Kohen Šedeq.

when the Palestinian gaon supported Mevasser against Kohen Šedeq and David b. Zakkai. In the other letter, he makes favorable mention of "the savior of the generation" Aaron b. ʿAmram, apparently because the latter supported him, the Palestinian gaon, in the struggle against the "Ananites" (who were then enjoying a long period of control in the Palestinian yeshivot); moreover: Aaron b. ʿAmram—apparently due to his commercial ties—was the person through whom the exchange of letters between the Palestinian gaon and Mevasser's party took place. Therefore, in summary, it may be said, as Mann had proven, that Aaron b. ʿAmram—perhaps in opposition to the other family of Baghdadi financiers, that of Neṭīrā—supported Mevasser's party. It may be that this tie between Mevasser Gaon and Aaron b. ʿAmram (and his sons), was expressed by Mevasser Gaon's appointment of Aaron ha-Kohen (i.e., Khalaf) b. Joseph (i.e., Sarjāda), who, according to Sherira Gaon, "has not been one of the *benē rabbānān* (scholars of the yeshiva); he was rather from among the merchants; it was Mevasser Gaon who appointed him to the Great Row of the yeshiva"; that is, something unheard of had taken place; Sherira Gaon is trying to tell us, that someone who was not a genuine member of the yeshiva, but a merchant, was appointed to sit in the first row of the yeshiva, whose occupants were chiefs of the courts, sons of geonim, and *alūfīm*. Nathan the Babylonian completes this description (in regard to another matter, but relevant to the present issue): Kalev (i.e., Khalaf) b. Sarjāda was "an important man.... assistant to the exilarch, and was wealthy", most important: Bishr b. Aaron was his father-in-law. It means that Mevasser Gaon appointed to an important position in the Pumbedita yeshiva, the son-in-law of the son of the financier Aaron b. ʿAmram. It appears that the previous controversy between the two families of financiers went on up to six-seven years further, when the Neṭīrā family opposed the appointment of the same Khalaf b. Sarjāda, i.e., Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, a member of the family of Aaron (b. ʿAmram), as gaon in Sura, and supported Saadia b. Joseph.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ See 12, I, b, line 8, and cf. Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 79: "four or five years". Regarding the time David b. Zakkai was appointed gaon I differ with Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 154. On the Palestinian gaon's letters, see Gil, *History*, I, 566-569; see the discussion in Mann, *ibid.*, 150-152, and, in his footsteps, also Rivkin, *Neuman Pres. Vol.*, 399, in the note. The appointment of Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph: Sherira, *Letter*, 120; Nathan the Babylonian: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 80, 82. The sons of Neṭīrā against the sons of Aaron: *ibid.*, 82. 10 is a fragment of the preamble to a letter written by David b. Zakkai, also on behalf of the gaon of Sura, Jacob b. Naṭrūnai and of the chief judge (see below; probably of the Sura yeshiva), Semah b. Kafnai. The lack of any mention of the Pumbedita yeshiva points to the fact that the letter was written in 915, when, in my opinion, David b. Zakkai was appointed as exilarch, although Pumbedita did not accept it. The letter addresses "all scholars and students and elders and the *rāshē sedārīm*", being the main figures of the yeshiva; see Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 22f., who assumes that the letter was written during the gaonate of Mevasser, whereas Kohen Šedeq—so he learned from this fragment—was appointed, as his competitor, only a few years after Mevasser. However, this conjecture is unacceptable, if I am right in assuming that David b. Zakkai's appointment occurred in the days of Judah Gaon, as stated above.

3. *Babylonia and the calendar controversy*

(142) The controversy at the Pumbedita yeshiva lasted until Elul of the year September 922, when, according to Sherira Gaon “the *nāsī* David and our Lord and Master Mevasser Gaon were brought into concord”; “however, our Lord and Master Mevasser Gaon and his scholars stayed apart, while the more distinguished scholars were on his side; and our Lord and Master Kohen Šedeq stayed apart as well”; i.e., the two parties maintained their separate existence (and the *muḥḥārīm*, the choice, i.e., Sherira Gaon’s father and his other relatives in the yeshiva, were in Mevasser’s party). This situation continued until the death of Mevasser gaon, in Kislev Sel. 1234, the end of November or in December 922 (or according to another version, in Sel. 1237, November AD 925; it appears that the former date is the correct one), when the parties ceased to exist and everyone accepted the authority of Kohen Šedeq. As Mann has shown, the peace achieved between the exilarch and Mevasser’s party should be understood against the background of the need to unite in the bitter rivalry that broke out between Babylonia and Palestine over the order of the calendar.

In my book on Palestine, I dealt with the sources regarding the calendar controversy while paying particular attention to the letters of the Palestinian gaon and their background. The two main sources for the history of the Jews of Babylonia in the period discussed here, are Nathan the Babylonian’s story and Sherira Gaon’s *Letter*, which have absolutely nothing to do with the calendar controversy. It is mentioned in two external sources: the Syriac chronicler, Elias of Nisibis, and the Karaite Sahl b. Maṣliāḥ, whereas the most important information comes from the disputation literature which survived in the Geniza. The person who raised the issue and who agitated the Babylonian Jewish public and its leaders was, as is known, Saadia b. Joseph, who would become gaon in Sura. It was he who mobilized the Jewish communities in Babylonia and the other Diaspora countries to oppose the calendar calculation for the year AM 4682 (921-922) in which according to the Palestinian gaon—Passover, in that year, would be celebrated on Sunday (thus turning Marheshwan and Kislev into ‘defective’ months, i.e., months with 29 days), and not by the accepted calculation, kept by the Babylonians, on Tuesday. David b. Zakkai, the exilarch, was supposed to author a “Memorial Book”, with a detailed description of the Babylonian side of the controversy issue, meant to be read every year to the congregations, on 20 Elul, to warn everyone against any dangerous deviations that might take place in the future. The clash between the two centers ended with Babylonia’s clear victory, not only because its people abided by the extant system, accepted—or so it would seem—by many generations of the Jews, but also because of the prestige of the Babylonian geonim and exilarchs in the Jewish communities, and because these communities clearly preferred them to the Palestinian geonim.

The beginning of the controversy is well-reflected in Saadia’s first letter, apparently written in December 921, to the three sons of ʿAlī b. Ṭabnai: Solomon, Abraham and Ezra, in Fustat. The earliest information about the Palestinian gaon’s (or the son of the gaon’s) plan was brought to Aleppo, where Saadia was staying, by *talmīdīm* who had arrived from “Baʿal Gad”,

which is Jubayl, in the summer of that same year of 921. Saadia himself wrote to the Palestinian gaon that summer, and letters were sent from Babylonia to the Jewish communities ("the great cities") in the name of "the exilarch and the heads of the yeshivot", and Saadia, too, wrote to the communities about the issue. It is clear that the proclamation of the Palestinian yeshiva about the calendrical order took place on Hoshana Rabba, i.e., 27 September 921, and rumor of it reached Baghdad in October. Also, in his second letter, of February or March 922, where Saadia writes to the "exilarch and all the yeshiva heads", it would appear that he meant the three Babylonian geonim: the heads of Pumbedita, Mevasser and Kohen Sedeq, and the head of the Sura yeshiva, whose identity is not certain, whether Jacob b. Naṭrūnai or Hayy b. Qāyōmā. According to Saadia, "all the *alūfīm* and all the scholars and the students are as one" in their opposition to the intentions of the Palestinian gaon.

On Thursday, 19 Tammuz of the same year (18 July 922), Saadia wrote to one of the personages at the Palestinian yeshiva (so it would seem). In his letter he severely admonishes whoever it was who had written letters "very offensive to the scholars, full of detestable words"; he expresses the hope that it was not his addressee who had written that letter and asks him "to rebuke the student who wrote it", "and even if he is the head, he should not be ashamed to retract his words". Apparently, it was clear to Saadia that the author of the anti-Babylonian letters was one of the Palestinian yeshiva's central personages, perhaps even the head of the yeshiva himself. The summer of 922 was apparently the zenith of the controversy, and it is no wonder that the exigencies of the hour led the Babylonians, despite their own conflicts, to unite.

Indeed, a few months later, in September 922, peace at the Pumbedita yeshiva was made official, when, as Sherira Gaon mentions in his *Letter*, Mevasser Gaon and the exilarch David b. Zakkai were reconciled. It appears that Mevasser Gaon died shortly afterwards, in November or December of that year, 922, and it is clear that from the two versions of Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, Sel. 1234 and 1237, as stated, the first one should be preferred. Proof of the same is in Saadia's third letter, written on 3 January 923, to those same sons of 'Alī b. Ṭabnai in Fustat—Solomon, Abraham and Ezra—where he mentions the letter the three wrote "to the head of the yeshiva and to Abū'l Faḍl", apparently meaning Kohen Sedeq, gaon of Pumbedita, and Sahl b. Neṭīrā—i.e., no longer to the "heads of the yeshiva" in the plural. The year AM 4682 passed, and, it would appear, not everyone heeded the warnings of the Babylonians. Among those who acquiesced to the Palestinian gaon and celebrated Passover on Sunday, instead of Tuesday, and who followed Palestine in the other aspects of the calendar and the festivals as well, were also the people of Fustat, both the 'Jerusalemites' and the 'Babylonians'; "the people of the city and you together with them", Saadia writes to his addressees, the Babylonians. In this letter of Saadia's, there is also an interesting detail about the manner of how the followers of the Palestinian gaon had influenced the Jews of Fustat to accept their view and reject the Babylonians' computation. It might very well be referred to as "the moon test"; Saadia specifically notes "the excitement of the ordinary folk when they saw the (new) moon". We may assume that the said date was the eve of 30 Marheshwan (1 Kislev

according to the Palestinian calculation) of the year AM 4682 (3-4 November 921), when the masses of Fustat Jews (we may assume that something similar occurred in many other communities) viewed the moon the day before it was supposed to appear according to the calculation of the Babylonians, the ancient Jewish calendar reckoning, that is determined by calculation and not by the sighting of the new moon. This was a victory, albeit temporary, for the Palestinian gaon, yet also for the Karaites and the *nesi'im* of the family of 'Anan and their followers, who defended the determination of the month by the sighting method. It may be that a similar spectacle also took place at the end of the month of Kislev, at nightfall of the 28th, by the Babylonians' calculation, which according to the Palestinian calculation was the 29th, 2-3 December 921. Saadia writes to his supporters in Fustat, when more than a year had passed since those events, that only now did he learn the facts, from the letter of those people of Fustat, who had, as stated, written to Kohen Šedeq and Sahl b. Neṭīrā, "since you do not write to me personally, only because of the shame that you feel over what was done by the people of the city, you among them". Further down: "... you only did so because you were confused.... you assumed that all the people of Iraq did the same; and I assume—even more, I am certain—that had you known that the people of Iraq do not do so, neither would you err and participate in such a terrible thing and such a great disaster". Saadia even describes his sense of shame of these Babylonians in Fustat being dragged along with the masses—something that undoubtedly caused great amazement in Baghdad, and harmed the prestige of Saadia, 'the Egyptian', who had only recently arrived in Baghdad, and who was the leader of the struggle against this terrible aberration. Further down, Saadia prods the three to carefully study the letter of the head of the yeshiva (i.e., Kohen Šedeq), "whose every word is like a principle of law", and make every effort to spread his opinion; the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, as well, wrote "a memorial book (or letter) to make clear for generations this defective novelty perpetuated by a son of darkness" (i.e., Meir's son, Aaron, son of the Palestinian gaon; Meir means: he who shines), and in the same book—as is implied—there was an explanation of the calendar computation, to last "for generations", i.e., lest such a mishap recur. What can be gleaned from Saadia's letter, is that the year AM 4682 was indeed a year of victory for the Palestinian gaon and possibly only in the next year, after vigorous guidance, did the Babylonian personages succeed in enforcing the correct calendrical rules in all the Jewish diasporas.¹⁴²

¹⁴² The peace in Pumbedita: Sherira, *Letter*, 119f; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 154f.; the date of Mevasser's death: see the versions in Sherira's *Letter*, 120. The peace between Mevasser and David b. Zakkai against the background of the calendar dispute: Mann, *ibid.*, 155. See the discussion on the calendar dispute: Gil, *History*, 562-569, with more references to sources and studies. A fragment from the *Sefer ha-mō'adim*, yet unpublished—as far as I know—is TS 10 J 32, f. 1. *Sefer ha-zikkārōn*: see Bornstein, *Sokolow Jub. Vol.*, 26; Malter, *Saadia*, 86f.; and see Margaliot, *Ha-hillūqim*, 10. See the copies of Saadia's letters: 5 (and the address at its end); *Ba'al gād* = Jubayl, see Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 18, and 6, a, from line 7f. July 922: see the letter edited by Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 273-276, after bringing together several fragments edited by his predecessors; and see *ibid.*, his reasonable arguments and the references; see 7, with the matter of observing the moon: *b*, lines 5ff.; see the rhymed version of the treatise of Yossi al-Nahrwānī, *arba'ā she'arim*, edited by

(143) It seems that a similar affair, where certain circles were opposed to the calendar order that the Rabbanites were required to keep, had also taken place more than eighty years earlier, but then the Babylonians accepted the calendar instructions of the Palestinians. Then it also had to do with a 'defective' year, i.e., where both Marheshwan and Kislev had twenty-nine days. Evidence is in the letter of the exilarch, of AM 4595, AD 834-835. Basically, he explains that the motive for the calendar order in this area (of *shin*, *kaf*, *het*, i.e., *shelēmōt*, *ke-sidrān*, *ḥasērōt* = complete, regular, defective years) is to maintain the rule of *lō aleph*, *dalet*, *waw*, *rōsh* (i.e., that Rosh Hashana shall never occur on a Sunday, a Wednesday, a Friday), and he elaborates his reasons for this rule, and says further: "thus you shall do, as all Jews do, as ordered by the head of the yeshiva and its scholars: make them 'defective', since we rely upon them.... We always rely upon them, so that the Jews be not divided in various groups; I myself and the heads of the yeshivot, and the scholars, and all Jews, rely on the 'ibbūr (intercalation of an additional month of Adar) as decided by our scholars"; he meant the head of the Palestinian yeshiva and its people. Mann, the first scholar who published this letter, noted that in Mahler's tables in his well-known book about the Jewish calendar, the year AM 4595 was a 'complete' year, as it indeed was, as was the following year as well, AM 4596. Yet Mann did not notice that the debate was regarding the determinations for the year AM 4597, that was indeed meant to be a 'defective' year. There definitely was a controversy, for if not, why did the exilarch have to write his letter? Thus Mann came to conclusions about a development that took place in the status of the two centers regarding the calendar issue, while basing himself on a paragraph in the letter of one of the Babylonian personages during the calendar controversy, that "many years ago some of the Babylonian scholars went to Palestine and delved into the mysteries of the leap year with the Palestinian scholars.... and for many years in Babylonia they have been determining the calendar for themselves"; furthermore, it is stated in the Babylonian letter that even people eighty years old have no recollection of the Babylonians ever having recourse to Palestine on calendrical issues. Mann learned from this, that between the two ends, between 835 (the exilarch's letter) and 921 (the controversy), and near the former, "Babylonian independence" began. Yet the conclusion regarding the issue depends on how seriously one should deem the text of the exilarch's letter, for there is no doubt that it was written during, and for the sake of, a polemic, and the dependence on the Palestinian personages was meant to strengthen his argument, that Marheshwan and Kislev had to be 'defective' months, and we can be sure that the Babylonian geonim and scholars were well-versed in the calendar calculations and its order even

Steinschneider, *Kerem ḥemed*, 41 (1856), 9, and the editor's comments in the continuation; after him: Epstein, *REJ*, 42 (1901), 208ff., see his preamble and notes. The writer was a contemporary of Saadia and joined his campaign. A parallel version is found in *Midrāsh sekhel ṭōv* (which is a collection of *midrāshim* on Genesis and Exodus, gathered by Menahem b. Solomon in the twelfth century), II, 90-92 (exegetics on Exodus xii:2), and see *ibid.*, the editor's notes. This was re-edited by Bornstein, *Sokolow Jub. Vol.*, 117ff.; I shall not delve here into the details regarding the calendar compute, and the reader may turn to the references I noted in: Gil, *History*, 562ff.; and see now the article by A. Lasker and D. Lasker, *Tarbiz*, 60 (1990/91), 119ff., who see the main reason of the calendar dispute in the time gap between Palestine and Babylonia due to the difference in their meridians.

long before then. I disagree (above, sec. 81) with Mann, that the exilarch was Judah b. David, it is more likely that it was his rival, Daniel b. Saul b. °Anan, who still referred to himself as 'exilarch'. Kohen Sedeq b. Ikhōmai (or b. Ivōmai; apparently 832-843), was then head of the Sura yeshiva, and the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva—Isaac b. Hūnai (or b. Ḥananiah; 833-840), the one who was embroiled in a controversy with Joseph b. Abbā, as I have noted above. It is possible that there was a connection between the controversy over the gaonate and the calendar issues, as they are reflected in the exilarch's letter.

We have seen that in the letter of the first half of the ninth century, the exilarch bases the gist of his argument on the rule of *lō aleph, dalet, waw, rōsh* (above in this section). In an article published in 1980, M.D. Herr sought to prove that the rule preventing Rosh Hashana from falling out on Sunday, was added to the Jewish calendar at a relatively late time, around the seventh century. However, the absence of such a basic rule might have caused a great change in the details of the dates; here, in fact, from the beginning of the seventh century, we have information about parallel dates according to three calendars: Jewish, Christian and Muslim. According to one of the early Muslim traditions, the arrival of Muḥammad in Medina took place on Monday, 12 Rabī° I; however, 12 Rabī° I, occurred on a Friday, furthermore, it would appear that this tradition concerned his arrival at Qubā', a kind of suburb of Medina, that was populated by Jews, and it was on 8 Rabī° I; Monday, 8 Rabī° I, of the first year of the *hijra*, fell on 20 September 620; according to the Muslim tradition, Muḥammad saw that the Jews were fasting, because it was their °Ashūrā day, i.e., the tenth day of the first month, which, of course, is Yom Kippur. In fact, according to the tables, in that year, Yom Kippur occurred on 20 September, and Rosh Hashana occurred, of course, on Sabbath. I disagree with Herr's findings in his interesting article. He interprets a passage in *Ma°asīm li-venē yisrā°ēl*, as if it states that vows may be released on the night of a Rosh Hashana that occurs at the end of the Sabbath, and that this is proof that Rosh Hashana can occur on a Sunday, as opposed to *lō aleph, dalet, waw, rōsh*. However, what it really states is: "Vows are not released on the nights of Rosh Hashana on the Sabbath; it is permitted after the Sabbath". I have no doubt that this means that it is permissible to release vows only at the end of the day, when Sabbath is out, and the meaning here of Sabbath is: the holiday (i.e., the end of the Rosh Hashana day, not of a Saturday), which is the simple meaning of this passage. Further along, Herr seeks to determine the time these sections of the *Ma°asīm* were written, by locating the time where, to his mind, it was decided to prevent Rosh Hashana from occurring on Sunday, i.e., by adding the *aleph* to that rule. He bases himself on three sources: (a) a tombstone inscription from Šo°ar, of AM 4263, AD 503, over the grave of a woman who died on Tuesday, 11 Elul (the following Rosh Hashana thus occurred on a Sunday); (b) a section of Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, stating that Aḥai b. Hūnā died on Sunday, 4 Adar (where we again find Rosh Hashana occurring on Sunday; which according to Mahler's charts then occurred on Monday, 4 Adar; see above, sec. 86); (c) the statements of R. Aḥai in the *she'iltōt* on the pericope *wa-yagħēl*, for Purim, on the times of "the early scholars who were well-versed in the calculation of the new moon and the details of the leap year; the day of °arāvā occurred on

Sabbath, and Purim occurred on the Sabbath, and the reading of the *megilla* on Sabbath, and the *lulav* was used on Sabbath, and the *shofar* was blown on a Sabbath in which Rosh Hashana occurs; but today, when the scholars are not well-versed in the calculation of the moon's cycles and the details of the leap year, the leading scholars have decreed", etc. Here Herr sees evidence that until near the time of R. Aḥai, i.e., the first half of the eighth century, Rosh Hashana still sometimes occurred on a Sunday (and the *ʿarāvā* day might fall on a Sabbath), and only at that time did the scholars issue a decree preventing such an occurrence. However, one should note that according to that section, not only was Sunday absent from *lō aleph, dalet, waw*, but Wednesday as well ("Purim on Sabbath", where Rosh Hashana would then occur on Wednesday). Obviously, there is no logic in this version of the *she'iltōt*, it is simply corrupted; nor should the language "today.... the leading scholars have decreed" (if R. Aḥai had indeed so said) be seen as showing the point in time when that scholars' decree was promulgated. As to the two early sources, they are indeed valid, yet they remain in the category of circumstantial evidence, and both may be based in error. If the rule of "Rosh Hashana does not fall on Sunday", was set in such a late period, we would certainly find explicit statements on this somewhere in the geonic literature, but nowhere is anything of the kind found. There is no reason to cast doubt on the traditions whereby the beginning of the calendrical order set by calculation indeed occurs at the time of Rabbi, the end of the second century and it is possible that improvements, or more comprehensive formulations occurred in the time of R. Isaac Nappāḥā, the third century *amōrā* (according to the Karaite tradition, in Qirqisānī), and the time of Hillel b. Judah, in AD 359 (according to Abraham b. Ḥiyyā, who wrote at the beginning of the twelfth century AD).¹⁴³

¹⁴³ The exilarch's letter: 3, with details in its preamble about previous publications; see the discussion in Mann, *Jews*, I, 52f.; see also Gil, *History*, 566f. An outstanding compendium is in: Poznanski, *Hastings Encycl.* III, 117ff., s.v. Calendar (Jewish). See the article by Herr, *Tarbiz*, 49 (1979/80), 76ff.; see what Bornstein, *Sokolow Jub. Vol.*, 154, and Lewin, in Sherira's *Letter*, 98, note c, thought about his sources. The arrival of Muḥammad in Medina: Ibn Hishām, 415; Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, I, 1255, 1281; Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, *ʿUyūn*, I, 192. Ibn Kathīr, *Biḍāya*, III, 190; cf. Weil, *Mohammed*, XXI, 76 n. 92; 81 n. 101. See Bornstein, *ibid.*, 32. Such occurrences, of a possible confrontation between the Jewish calendar and the Muslim (and the Christian) are quite rare indeed. It appears that the next such information is 236 years later, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *ʿAjā'ib*, MS Paris 1567, 26a: in the year 244 *ʿid al-aḥḍā*, *ʿid al-ḥijr* of the Jews, and *al-shaʿanin* of the Christians, all coincided; see the same in Ibn al-Jawzī, MS Paris 1505, 157b. Indeed, the Sunday preceding Easter and 10 *dhū'l-hijja* coincided, on 19 March 859, but the first of the Passover AM 4619 fell then on 23 March. See also Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḫh*, III, 2024; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, V, 64: in the year 268 the first of Passover fell on the Sunday of the third week in *ramaḍān*, which was then 9 April, according to tables of Christian and Muslim dates; but according to Mahler's tables, the Passover in AM 4642 began on 7 April (AD 882), and 17 was a Saturday. Poznanski, *JQR*, 10 (1897/8), 15, assumed that the calendar was finally decided in Babylonia, after the sealing of the Talmud, in the sixth or the seventh century; see the discussion on the various opinions about the inception of the calendar compute, on margin of the "scroll of Abiathar", in Gil, *Palestine*, III, 410, in the note, with more references. The opinion of Saadia was that the calendar compute was decided on Mount Sinai, and that even in most remote times, before the destruction of the Temple and in the times of the Mishnā, the order of the month was decided according to a well established compute and not by the sighting of the new moon (such was also the view in "the scroll of Abiathar"). However, the more accepted view was that Rabbī Judah *ha-nāsī* was the one who introduced (or made public) the

4. *Saadia Gaon's controversies*

(144) When the calendar controversy abated, and with the Babylonians' victory, Saadia's prestige grew even greater. His appointment as gaon of Sura was on the horizon. Sherira Gaon describes the protracted decline of this yeshiva. On the surface, the crisis began about forty years before Saadia's appointment, after the deaths of Šemaḥ b. Ḥayyim (who was gaon ca. 879-886) and of R. Malkā (after serving as gaon for only one month), when, according to Sherira Gaon, "most elders of Mātā Maḥsiya (Sura) passed away in three months". From this description it sounds like they were struck by a plague. Twenty-five years later, after Hayy b. Naḥshōn (886-896), Hillaï b. Naṭrūnai (896-904), and Shalom b. Mišael (904-911; we have seen that Nathan the Babylonian has different information) had served there as geonim, "the situation of Maḥsiya deteriorated again, and no scholars remained there"; nevertheless, Jacob b. Naṭrūnai was considered fit to be appointed gaon in 911, and he served in that post thirteen years, until 924. Then something happened, the likes of which had never been heard of before (in contrast to the generations of *tannā'im* and *amōrā'im*), that "David, the *nāsī* (exilarch) appointed Mr. Yōm Ṭōv Kahanā b. R. Jacob, who was a weaver, as gaon, since there were not any scholars there; (he served) four years". This apparently brings us close to the year 928; then when Yōm Ṭōv ha-Kohen b. Jacob died, the Babylonian scholars considered closing the Sura yeshiva and transferring its remaining

calendar compute. See Saadia's view on the antiquity of the compute in Poznanski's article in the encyclopaedia (above in this note), 264, where he also edited a part of a Bodleian manuscript; and Davidson, in his introduction to Salmon b. Yerūḥim's *Sefer miḥāmōt*, 14f.; see *Resp.*, Lyck, no. 1, the responsum of Hayy Gaon on a query regarding Saadia's opinion on the antiquity of the compute, claiming that there is no doubt that Jews always acted according to the rules of the intercalations and the compute". Hayy's view was—so it is implied—that Saadia's argument was meant only as polemic, "to refute an unbeliever", and that Good has attributed the calendar matters to the *bēi dīn*, meaning that it was the *sanhedrin* that decided in these matters. See the view ascribing the calendar compute to the *nāsī* Hillel b. Judah, Sel. 670, AD 359. See Abraham b. Hiyyā (beginning of the twelfth century), *Sefer ha-ʿibbūr*, 97. The Karaite tradition (evidently borrowed from the Rabbanites) about R. Isaac Nappāḥā ('the smith'): "...the accepted custom was to fix the beginning of the month by observing the moon, but they (the Rabbanites) began fixing the compute according to the rule of *lō bet, dalet, waw* (i.e., that the Passover shall never begin on a Monday, or a Wednesday, or a Friday), whose origin is unknown. This is the method invented by Isaac Nappāḥā, and Hayy (b. Naḥshōn; Sura ca. 886-896) mentions it in a book he wrote" (see also below, sec. 203). See Qirqisānī, 23, 143, 805; see also Pinsker, *Liqqūṭe qadm.*, II, 150, n. f, citing from the book *yehi me'ōrōt* of the Karaite Judah Hadaši, who quotes Tobiah b. Moses, who reproduced Qirqisānī's main statements. See the article of Reinach, *REJ*, 18 (1899), 90ff., with opinions of ancient writers on the Jewish calendar system; also, Lieberman, *Tosefā ki-f.*, to *Rōsh ha-shānā*, ii, 2 (p. 1037): "if (the month) was sanctified under constraint, or faultily, or *mezidīn*.... it is nevertheless sanctified"; he interprets *mezidīn*: although they knew the truth about actually sighting the moon, they computed so that Yom Kippūr shall never fall on a Friday or a Sunday, and the like". See also *idem* in *Talpiyōt*, 2 (1944/5), 375ff. (I thank my colleague Prof. M.B. Lerner for calling my attention to Lieberman's statements.) See also Lieberman, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 102ff., on Saadia's views about the antiquity of the calendar compute, and cf. Fleischer, *Tarbiz*, 49 (1979/80), 104ff. TS NS 309.68(b) is another fragment belonging to the calendar dispute, expressing the views of the Babylonians in the dispute; the version is similar, but not identical, with the one edited by Bornstein, *Sokolow Jub. Vol.*, 90, lines 14ff.

scholars to Pumbedita. (According to Nathan the Babylonian, there was in Sura yet another gaon: Hayy b. Qāyōmā.) In a last attempt, they appointed Nathan *alūf* (b. Judah Gaon), the brother of Ḥananiah Gaon (father of Sherira Gaon), i.e., Sherira's uncle, as Sura gaon, but he died before assuming the post. Then, the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, who certainly had a very high opinion of the Sura yeshiva, invited Saadia b. Joseph. Here, too, Sherira emphasizes that it was an exceptional step, because Saadia was not one of the scholars of Babylonia or of its yeshivot, but hailed from Egypt, and was known by the sobriquet the Fayyumite, or the Pitomite ("and he was not one of the scholars of the yeshiva, but from Egypt and known as the Fayyumite"). It was he whom David appointed gaon of Sura, on 23 May 928 (a Friday).

Nathan the Babylonian supplies some details about the circumstances of the appointment. According to him, the events took place after the death of the gaon of Sura, Hayy b. Qāyōmā. The exilarch had two possible candidates in mind for the Sura gaonate, Saadia b. Joseph, and Ṣemaḥ b. Shahīn. If Shahīn (it should probably be: Shahūn) was another name for his father, it is possible that Ṣemaḥ was no other than the chief judge Ṣemaḥ b. Kafnai (Kafnai—the name also of Bustanai's father—is an unusual name, to the best of my knowledge) who is mentioned in the preamble of a letter written by the exilarch, David b. Zakkai. If so, it is possible that a Suran, Ṣemaḥ b. Kafnai, or b. Shahīn, was the one who later became gaon in Pumbedita (935-937). It is possible that this Ṣemaḥ, the grandson of a gaon (not the son of a gaon, as Abramson wrote), was the grandson of the Sura gaon, Ṣemaḥ b. Ḥayyim (c. 879-886), thus the lineage should be as follows: Ḥayyim—Ṣemaḥ—Kafnai (Shahīn)—Ṣemaḥ. It thus appears that this Ṣemaḥ, who almost became gaon in Sura, was, at the time of David b. Zakkai's vacillations, the chief judge of Sura, and not that of the exilarch or of Pumbedita, as is Abramson's assumption. However, the exilarch had a preferred candidate, Nissī al-Nahrwānī, whom we have already met above, when he sought to win the agreement of Judah b. Samuel, the Pumbedita gaon, for the appointment of David b. Zakkai as exilarch. However, Nissī refused, because he was blind ("the head of the yeshiva is called the light of the world", while he was "the dark of the world"). Nissī advised David b. Zakkai to prefer Ṣemaḥ b. Shahīn, because "R. Saadia, even though a great man with immense wisdom, feared no one, deferred to no one in the world, because of his great wisdom, and his large mouth (reading suggested by Mann, which seems likely) and his long tongue, and his fear of any transgressions". This is a kind of *ex post facto* prophecy, for in the continuation of his story, Nathan tells of Saadia's refusal to accept a decision of the exilarch and approve his ruling regarding the inheritance of one of Babylonia's richest men, thus Nathan ascribes to Nissī much foresight. However, David b. Zakkai had already decided to appoint Saadia to the Sura gaonate, and Kohen Šedeq, the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva, agreed to the appointment. As Mann has already shown, the exilarch was apparently pressured into the decision by the sons of the financier Neṭīrā, Sahl and Isaac, strong Saadia supporters.

A spirit of rejoicing and great self confidence is felt in the letter Saadia wrote after his appointment as gaon (*fī waqt an wuliya al-riyāsa*) to the Babylonian community of Fustat, it should be assumed, even though the

letter is addressed to: "the Jewish communities residing in the city of Fustat". As usual, words of greeting open the letter in his name, in the name of the *alūfīm*, in the name of "She'ērīt our boy" (it appears that Dōsā, his other son, was still a baby), in the name of "all the scholars of the yeshiva", in the name of "the regular *mashnīm* (teachers) in the house of our Master" and in the name of "the important and distinguished family heads of Baghdad". He elaborates on the importance of the learning that had accompanied the Jews in their land as well as in the Diaspora, the intention being: the oral law, for "the written law does not elaborate all of the finer points of the precepts and the laws.... some biblical laws are not elaborated therein, but are elaborated in the *mishnā*"; and he asks that they band together around him and write to him regularly, "for if there is no army there is no king, and without students the scholars have no glory". As I have already shown above, in his letter Saadia (below, sec. 363) emphasized the support of the Baghdadi financiers who were capable of getting whatever they wanted from the rulers (Egypt was then in a period of transition between the Ṭulūnid and Iḥshīdīd rule, after the caliphate army reestablished its rule in it): "Every desire and quest that you have of the rulers, just say what it is, and we will order the important notables in Baghdad, among whom we live, the sons of Master Neḥīrā and the sons of Master Aaron, may the memory of the ingathered (the deceased) be blessed, and may (God) remember the survivors for a (long) life, and they will obtain the goodwill of the king", etc.

From that letter it is clear that Saadia stayed in Baghdad after his appointment as gaon of Sura, because when speaking of the support of the moneyed Baghdadis, he mentions that he was staying with them in the city ("the important notables in Baghdad, among whom we live"). The same sense of rejoicing also exudes from another letter, the one considered "the second one", that Saadia wrote after his appointment. He writes in a boasting tone, and also makes statements meant to strengthen the ties of his readers to their communities and deter them from ideas about defecting (to the Karaites?): "Your fathers did not change a single thing from the oral Law"; "do not defect from the community, for the defector is lustful and is overridden by any argument". The Torah is the basis of the nation's existence, and is the true wealth: "... your money and your gold are the Torah and learning." Time after time, he appeals to the community, also with requests that they send queries and contributions to the yeshiva (i.e., to Sura): "When giving your contributions to God give the choicest"; "when you have to know the words of the Torah, do not hesitate to ask"; "send and ask us, and we will be with you, our lips will not be restrained". In another letter, apparently from him, he notes that he teaches many people: "We are residing in Baghdad, teaching the people"; this, of course, gives rise to a question that remains unanswered, whether the Sura yeshiva, all or in part, had moved to Baghdad. There is no doubt that he sought a full renewal of Sura, and he was certainly capable of doing so. Sherira notes that Saadia, from the outset, assembled the remaining scholars of Sura and its young students (*ʿalūlē*; he might mean "those who come to Sura", i.e., that they were appointed by Sura and recognized by it), who had in the meantime moved to Pumbedita, and restored Sura to its erstwhile status. Two years after Saadia's appointment, he came into conflict with David b. Zakkai, the

exilarch, when attempting, unsuccessfully, to depose him in favor of David's brother, Josiah b. Zakkai, which resulted in the latter's forced exile to Khurāsān. David b. Zakkai also tried his hand at deposing, and brought in Joseph b. Jacob, known by his nickname of Bar Saṭyā, as gaon of Sura instead of Saadia. Saadia apparently had to escape with his life: "Rav Saadia hid for a few years", until peace was made between him and the exilarch, and Joseph b. Jacob remained in the Sura yeshiva and continued as gaon after Saadia's death (17 May 942), when the yeshiva fell into a total decline, and Joseph b. Jacob was forced to move to Baṣra, where he died. Sherira continues: "Until this year (i.e., when he wrote his *Letter*, in 987) there is still no yeshiva in Maḥsiya".

The years of Saadia's gaonate were not tranquil ones; there were riots and upheavals in the caliphate, in general, and Baghdad, in particular. Our sources do not indicate any connection between the general situation and the controversy embroiling the Babylonian Jewish leadership at the time, of which Saadia was a party; nevertheless the background picture should be taken into account. Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, notes that in the year 316, especially on 9 Ramaḍān (26 October 928), there were harsh riots in Baghdad, at the center of which was the demonstration by the people of Qaṣr Ibn Hubayra (where the exilarch lived), who came to Baghdad and prevented the shops from opening; masses of Baghdadis joined them, wrecking the central commodities warehouse and some government offices. This occurred towards the end of the caliphate of al-Muqtadir, and the unquiet continued unabated. The rioting increased, especially close to the time of al-Muqtadir's fall in 319 (931; al-Muqtadir was assassinated on 31 October 932). The caliphate was then subjected to strong pressure because of the attacks of the Qarmaṭīs, and the ruler, because of his character and personality, could not stand in the breach, he even contributed to the chaos. Furthermore, there were also severe plagues, especially in that year, 931, when so many people died that their bodies were buried in mass graves. Also, in the years 329 and 330 (October 940-September 942, the last years of Saadia's gaonate) there were plagues, drought and hunger—to such a great extent that people ate corpses.

Whereas Sherira Gaon briefly mentions that Saadia conflicted with David b. Zakkai, Nathan the Babylonian was more generous, and has given us a detailed description of the cause and course of the controversy. The controversy erupted, according to him, after a dispute over a large inheritance, houses (*ḥaṣṣērôt*, compounds) and much money. The embattled inheritors were prepared to set aside ten percent of the inheritance for the exilarch, in return for his efforts "to cast off the aspersions against them and bring out the justice of their cause". Judging by the sum cited by Nathan, if 700 dinars were going to the exilarch, the inheritance was worth 7,000 dinar (a sum whose buying power today would come to \$5,000,000). Therefore, David b. Zakkai ruled what he ruled, and asked the beneficiaries to apply to the heads of the yeshivot for their *qiyvūm*, validation, to be affixed onto the papers containing his ruling. Apparently, the custom in Babylonia required the signatures of the heads of the yeshivot for the exilarch's (or his Court's) decisions. It may be that the custom was applicable mainly on rulings involving great wealth, or perhaps as an antidote for the prying of the rulers, who were especially alert regarding the

inheritances of the *dhimmīs*. Saadia first sent the beneficiaries to Kohen Šedeq, gaon of Pumbedita, who affixed his signature; yet when they returned to Saadia, he refused to sign; only after they pleaded with him and placated him did he agree to elaborate on the reasons for his refusal. Here there is a rather tangible description of the pressure David b. Zakkai applied on Saadia, when he sent him his son Judah a number of times to persuade him to sign; Judah even threatened the gaon and almost hit him ("he lifted his hand against R. Saadia"), to the extent that the gaon's retinue was forced to throw him out. From this point on, the story complies with Sherira's *Letter*; there were mutual bans, the exilarch appointed Joseph b. Jacob (Bar Saṭyā) in Saadia's place, and Saadia, for his part, appointed as exilarch David's brother, Josiah (Nathan adds his Arabic name: Ḥasan).

In the geonic responsa published by Harkavy, a ruling of the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, is preserved, regarding a conflict over an inheritance, from which one can learn about the nature of the documents connected to that controversy, and about the nature of the *qiyūm* the exilarch sought from Saadia. *Bāvā de-metivtā* of Mātā Maḥsiya, i.e., the Court of "our Lord and Master Saadia", was asked to validate "the ruling made by the Court of David the exilarch", that arrived sewn and rolled up (*ḥiṭ ṭ-melappaf*); that is, the parts were sewn together (apparently: the sheet that contained the gist of the matter and the signatures of the witnesses was sewn together with the sheet with the *qiyūm* of the exilarch and his Court) and rolled up. The substance of the ruling, was that the deceased, Bahbūd b. Nāṭir, had sold Ḥasan b. Barīkān a third of a house, but because Ḥasan did not have a bill of sale, the heirs wanted it for themselves. The exilarch ruled in Ḥasan's favor, because he introduced witnesses who testified that he had indeed paid Bahbūd 50 dinars for that part of the house. In this case, that certainly occurred before the controversy, Saadia added his *qiyūm* and even detailed the reasons: (a) since they may write whenever they wish, where they bought it from him; (b) it was verified that this b. Barīkān is living in this house; (c) the court of the *nāsī* (the exilarch) investigated the matter and it was not found that Bahbūd had any houses in Baghdad except the house in which Ḥasan b. Barīkān was living.

In addition to what Sherira Gaon wrote in his *Letter*, and what Nathan the Babylonian told the people of Qayrawān, there are authentic statements made by the parties to the controversy, and statements about them, in the fragments of Saadia's *Sefer ha-galui*. Therein, it is clear that Saadia was forced to struggle, not only with David b. Zakkai, but with a triumvirate, whose other two members were Aaron b. Joseph, i.e., Khalaf b. Sarjāda, and Kohen Šedeq, gaon of Pumbedita. Nathan the Babylonian had some things to say about the rivalry between Saadia and Khalaf:

There was an important man in Babylonia whose name was Kalev (the Hebrew form of the Arabic name Khalaf; see what I wrote about the name Khalaf, below, sec. 367) a wealthy assistant of the exilarch, who gave 60,000 *zūz* to have R. Saadia removed from his position. He did not succeed, because the sons of Neṭīrā and all the wealthy people of Babylonia were on R. Saadia's side. This Kalev was jealous of R. Saadia, because this Kalev was very articulate and a man great in scholarship, and he could give an answer or two to any question he was asked. But R. Saadia was ten times greater, so (Kalev) was jealous of him.

In fact, we see that Khalaf b. Sarjāda and his defenders are well represented in the *Sefer ha-galui*. We have seen that Khalaf was the son-in-law of Bishr b. Aaron b. ʿAmram, thus it was only natural that in this enormous controversy the sons of Aaron championed the aforementioned triumvirate, Khalaf, Kohen Šedeq, and David b. Zakkai, while the sons of Neṭīrā supported Saadia. Pumbedita's part, i.e., that of Kohen Šedeq and his entourage, in the controversy, is first mentioned in the *Sefer ha-galui*: ".... And when Yidod (a pejorative sobriquet for David b. Zakkai) and the flies at the left...." (the left—Pumbedita, as opposed to the right, Sura). The main attack on Khalaf is found in the fragment of the *Sefer ha-galui* published by Stern: everything he knows about the Torah is the ten formulas of the books of deeds (*kutub al-wathā'iq*), which he had occasion to use, and use again, many times. Such a thing is not possible with the Muslims, i.e., that a person is considered well-versed in matters of law and suitable of adjudicating, if the only thing he knew was the formularies of deeds; while Khalaf knows nothing of Scripture, *mishnā*, *talmūd*, *naẓar* (which Stern interprets: scholarship, but it seems to me that juridical matters, or adjudication is meant), nor *adab* (belles lettres, according to Stern), but only *batriyya* (Stern: "not understood"; I think it derives from the Aramaic *betar*, i.e., the later writings, or the secondary ones); his knowledge is sparse, because he did not dedicate his youth to study, rather to eating and drinking; he has an income of 80 dinar a year from money meant for Pumbedita (above we have seen that he had an important status in the yeshiva, from the time of Mevasser Gaon; in Saadia's words: *min al-anbār*.... *rashawāt*, i.e., money of the *rāshūt*, the Pumbedita authority, and not as translated by Stern: "from al-Anbār—a city on the Euphrates river.... bribery"); and he refers to him by an endearing sobriquet: "the vomition of what a dead dog had swallowed". Furthermore, he says that Khalaf was happy about the controversy between the exilarch and Saadia, for if the Rabbanite Jews (which Stern translates as: the scholars of the yeshiva) were not preoccupied with it, they would have come out against him, against Khalaf; moreover, thanks to the controversy, the exilarch needed his help all the time. There he is also referred to as son of 'gravediggers' (an exceptionally harsh defamation of a *kohen*).

Similar defamations are found in the statements of Khalaf (apparently) that he wrote in his notebook, disputatious statements about Saadia. From the facts that I have presented above, there is in it confirmation of the fact that Saadia wanted to appoint "my brother as *nāsī*" (exilarch), "and he did call him the *nāsī*"—i.e., the affair of the appointment of Josiah, David's brother. In that same event, he desecrated the Sabbath, when going with Hasan (i.e., Josiah), brother of the exilarch, to the house of a certain Mubārak, in full view of most of the Jews of Baghdad. A certain Ephraim b. Saṭyā (perhaps the brother of Joseph b. Jacob, whom David b. Zakkai had appointed gaon of Sura instead of Saadia, as I have noted above according to the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon), whom Khalaf b. Sarjāda appointed as *dayyān* in Mosul—but it is not clear what was the point of mentioning him, while noting the fact that they called him (Saadia called him?) "mouse face". Also mentioned are al-Sabbākh (a metals smelter?) whom Khalaf appointed *dayyān* in Ahwāz, and some other people, by name and sobriquet. Then comes the matter of the appointment of "Joseph (b.

Jacob, i.e., b. Saṭyā) gaon son of geonim, grandson of serving *kōhanīm*" (son of Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai, and brother of Yōm Ṭōv [*ha-kohen*] the weaver; in the Book of Tradition it is written, erroneously, Joseph b. R. Jacob b. R. Mordecai). Further on, Khalaf presents the issue of the ban against Saadia issued by David b. Zakkai "in the great synagogues of Baghdad", while two "heads of yeshivot and *dayyānīm*(?) were sitting before him". There the exilarch presented written testimony from Palestine, according to which Saadia was the son of converts to Judaism, about which, he contends, there is evidence also in letters that Baghdad merchants received in answer to their queries; Saadia lied when he claimed that the public fast that he had declared had stopped the plague, for on the day of its proclamation Jews died (above I have mentioned the plague reported in an Arabic source); he hurled false accusations at "Kohen Šedeq head of the yeshiva"; here Saadia is referred to as: Sa'īd al-Fayyūmī; "he caused quarrels between me and Ḥasan my brother"—David b. Zakkai says in the writ of excommunication; "he is a nameless villain and his forefathers may be compared with sheepdogs".

One can imagine how much this controversy upset the Jewish community of Baghdad, as well as the other communities of Babylonia and Persia, and all the countries where there were Babylonian communities. At first, Saadia was linked to the Pumbeditans, especially—as we have seen—with the party of Kohen Šedeq, David b. Zakkai's ally, of all things, among whom was then also Khalaf b. Sarjāda—while now Saadia was engaged in a bitter battle against these three personages. Not all the wealthy Baghdadis sided with Saadia, it appears that his main supporters were, as stated, the sons of Neṭīrā, especially Sahl. We shall see below what became of the Neṭīrā family—Sahl b. Neṭīrā was murdered in 938, while the sons of Aaron continued to flourish and be successful. It is not beyond the realm of probability that the serious decline in the power, possibly the total decline of the Neṭīrā family, was what weakened Saadia Gaon's position in relation to that of the exilarch, and spurred the compromise between him and his adversaries.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ See Sherira, *Letter*, 116ff. See there the other version: "Yomṭōv Kahanā son of our Lord and Master Jacob; although he was a weaver", which stresses the unusual nature of the appointment. The more reliable version has *ha-fayyūmī*, while in the 'Spanish' one: *ha-pūṭōmī*. Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 80ff.; see the date of his death in 9: 26 Iyyar Sel. 1253, and it says there that he was appointed gaon 14 years, less four days, earlier. The date is proven by both manuscripts of 9, pace Mann, *Texts*, I, 67 n. 12; see *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 161. Saadia's letter: see 8a, lines 15ff.; c, lines 1 ff. *Bēṭ rabbēnū* is an elusive term, see the discussion on it in Mann, *Texts*, I, 69f. Mann there stresses the fact that Saadia does not mention the exilarch, but only the Baghdadi magnates, which shows that the exilarch was then less influential; this is possible, but the cause of not mentioning him might also have been that their relations were rather cool, although it is David b. Zakkai who appointed Saadia as gaon of Sura. See also Mann, in that article, in *Tarbiz*, 157f.; also 167f., where he has interpretation (sometimes not to the point) of the various appellations in the sources about the dispute. See the 'second' letter, in Revel, *Devir*, I (1922/3), 180ff., and see what Epstein wrote, in the same volume, 189. "We sit in Baghdad and teach the people", see the fragment TS 13 J 31, f. 4, in Mann, *JQR* NS 9 (1918/9), 140-146, 148-150. Mann ascribed the fragment to the gaon Hayy b. David. In *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 260, Mann edited a fragment which is a confirmation of the former, Mosseri II.60.1, see also his *Texts*, I, 73, where he amends his view, ascribing the letter to Saadia Gaon. My view is that these two fragments should perhaps be inserted in the missing part of 8 (after its b section). The letter edited by Revel belonged to a manuscript bought by N. Slouschz in Morocco; it was written

(145) Nathan the Babylonian indicates that the controversy lasted seven years; according to him, it erupted two years after Saadia became gaon of Sura, and thus its end was in 937; it occurred on the Fast of Esther, i.e., 17 February. A stormy event took place near the end—the exilarch's people (as implied in the corrupted version) struck a man who was litigating against someone; his entire crime was, that while his opponent was being

in Segovia (Spain) in AM 5198 (1438). See also Epstein, *Devir*, 2 (1923/4), 325f.; cf. Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 225f.; see the fragment of the preamble to the letter of the exilarch: 10, and the view of Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 22f. See Ḥamza al-Ḥṣḥānī, 132-135; on the plagues and the drought: Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *Nujūm*, under the years 319, 329, 330. Cf. the PhD dissertation of Heilman, 20ff. See the matter of Bahbūd's house: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 276f. (no. 555), and see his notes *ibid.*, 389. The name Bahbūd (thus spelled in the Arab sources), is uncommon. The name of the leader of the Zanjī rebellion (towards the end of the ninth century) was Bahbūd b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, see Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh*, in the Index; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, V, 69. Also: Ibrāhīm b. Mālik b. Bahbūd, of the Muslim figures in Baghdad during the second half of the tenth century (died in 264, AD 986/7), see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh*, VI, 186. Bahbūd is a Persian name, apparently corresponding to the Hebrew Ṭōv, which is extant in the contemporary sources (I am grateful to Prof. S. Shaked for his explanations on the name Bahbūd). Harkavy assumed that Bahbūd b. Nāṭir might have been of the sons of Neṭīrā, since Nāṭir = Neṭīrā. This is possible, though in this case we would have to assume that Bahbūd was the other name of either Sahl or Isaac, the names of the sons of Neṭīrā, the famous Baghdadi financier; it is also in doubt since the sentence was detrimental for the heirs of that Bahbūd b. Nāṭir, though one might argue that Saadia would not have shown partiality even to his main supporters, the sons of Neṭīrā. On Yidōd, 'the flies', etc., see Chapira, *REJ*, 68 (1914), 9ff.; fragments of the *Sefer ha-galuy*: Harkavy, *Zikkārōn la-rish.*, V, 167; see *ibid.*, 144, a list of the mocking nicknames invented by Saadia. See Stern, *Melila*, 5 (1955/6), 144. The onslaught against Khalaf: Stern *ibid.*, 141-144, and the translation, 137f. See extracts from the notebook of Khalaf b. Sarjāda, as copied by a Karaite, in Harkavy, *ibid.*, 225ff., and see the preamble and the notes of the editor. Bar Satyā in Ibn Daʿūd: the *Book of Tradition*, 42. See Auerbach, *Festschr. Wohlgenut*, 6 n. 12a. See Lewin, in Sherira's *Letter*, 118, nn. a, b; Harkavy, *ibid.*, 228 n. 9, remarks that the father, Jacob b. Naṭrūnāi, is called *kohen* in 10, line 3. Marx, *Ginze q.*, 3 (1924/5), 57, ascribes to Joseph b. Jacob three responsa, from ENA 1765 (out of six responsa, two fully preserved and four fragmentary). The first is a fragment of a responsum extant in *Resp. Ge'ōnē mizr.*, no. 172; it deals with an event of 1280 Sel., AD 969; a father refused to bequeath a sixth of an estate in Fustat that he had promised to him. 23 years later, in 992, the younger son argues that his older brother took hold of this sixth. See the editor's note (Müller, *ibid.*, fol. 42a, note a) who is in doubt whether the responsum is of Joseph the Spaniard (Ibn Abī Tūr) or, as would stand to reason, of Ḥanōkh b. Moses. See the opinion of Assaf, *Kiryat Sefer*, 2 (1924/5), 183, that perhaps the first responsum is of Joseph b. Jacob while the others are of Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr (apparently, he ignores Müller, who was the first to propose that it may have been by Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr). As to Ephraim b. Satyā, who is mentioned in the polemic, who was perhaps a brother of Joseph b. Jacob, there is mention of him in MS Firkovitch II no. 1679, cited by Mann, *Texts* (above in this note), 478: Ephraim *al-dayyān...ra's al-kull* (=rōsh kallā, *infra*, sec. 239). Interestingly Aaron (Khalaf) ha-Kohen b. Joseph appointed him as *dayyān* in Mosul before he became gaon of Pumbedita, which points at his status in the yeshiva already in the day of Kohen Šedeq Gaon. The polemical tract of Khalaf against Saadia had been held by Firkovitch, who copied it, and it was translated into Hebrew by his grandson and sent to Abraham Geiger. It was first mentioned by Fin, in *Ha-Karmel*, 1 (Marheshwan) 1871/2, 62f.; it was edited by Geiger in *JZWL*, 10 (1872), 172ff.; cf. Rivkin, *Neuman Pres. Vol.*, 394 n. 2. The gist of the dispute was in the abrogation of the oath by Saadia to the exilarch, as said in the writ of excommunication of the exilarch against Saadia. *Ibid.*, 397, Rivkin notes the unfairness of Saadia, who first sent the decisions of the exilarch to Kohen Šedeq and thereafter expressed his reservations and challenged them both. The text of the ban was printed by Harkavy, *Zikkārōn la-rish.*, V, 233f. The ban was proclaimed before 933, as Josiah b. Zakkai is mentioned in it, who died three years after being appointed exilarch by Saadia, i.e., in 933. See in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 81.

“adjudicated by the exilarch”, he asked Saadia Gaon to represent him in the controversy, that was—so it is implied—under arbitration. The pretext was certainly that the man had dared to violate the ban against Saadia. According to Nathan the Babylonian, the violence caused a great tumult in the Baghdad Jewish community (“they took what happened very hard”). On the other hand, what contributed to the tumult was the breach of the accepted order, that both the exilarch and the heads of the yeshivot should not infringe upon each other’s bailiwick; this reason brought by Nathan does not sound likely in this case, and, as stated, it is the violation of the ban against Saadia that was the cause of the outbreak. In all events, the Baghdad community had had enough of the controversy, violence and all, and it decided to apply pressure on the representative of the wealthiest and most aristocratic family in Babylonia, the family of the sons of Aaron, demanding that Bishr b. Aaron put an end to the feud. Even though Nathan does not explicitly say so, it is clear that the pressure was placed on the exilarch’s side, for the sons of Aaron (including their son-in-law, Khalaf b. Sarjāda) clearly belonged to his party. Thus the language of the Baghdadis appeal, demanding that an end be put to the controversy, is understandable, “that it is only due to your son-in-law, Kalev b. Sarjāda”. Therefore, Bishr arranged a gathering of “the great of the generation” at his home, along with the exilarch; they then persuaded the exilarch to become reconciled with Saadia. Further along, Nathan describes the peace-making ceremony, replete with hugs and kisses, not forgetting to note the common feast that was held—“after they drew lots”—at the home of the exilarch, “for the lots fell on the exilarch, that R. Saadia go to him, and so it was done”.

The controversy certainly made waves throughout the Jewish world of the time, that knew about it, and it brought about even Muslim involvement. Al-Masʿūdī, a contemporary, notes that Saʿīd b. Yaʿqūb (as he erroneously refers to him, instead of b. Yūsuf) “was in contention in Iraq with the exilarch Daʿūd b. Zakkī, a descendant of Daʿūd (King David), who was embroiled in a controversy against him, at the time of the caliphate of al-Muqtadir. Because of them parties arose among the Jews. The matter was deliberated in a council (*majlis*) of the vizier, ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā, and the other viziers that were with him, and *qāḍīs* and men of learning (*ahl al-ʿilm*), to clarify the issue among them”.

The details given by Abraham Ibn Daʿūd are also found in Nathan the Babylonian, and in the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon. However, it is possible that Abraham Ibn Daʿūd had Nathan the Babylonian’s Arabic original before him, and thus refers to the exilarch’s son as Zakkai b. David, instead of Judah b. David. It is possible that this was the source Abraham Ibn Daʿūd used to describe the meeting between the exilarch and Saadia in a different way: (The son of the exilarch said to Saadia:) “If you don’t carry it out I’ll bash your head with a shoe. Right away, all the men of the yeshiva got very angry, they stood up as one man and repeatedly struck the exilarch’s son with their shoes, and he went to his father feeling lowly and ashamed. His father sought support from the royalty and was supported by a large party from the community, and R. Saadia by another large party from the community.... Then David became stronger, having the support of the royalty, removed his brother (Josiah) and sought Saadia’s death”, etc. It appears that Nathan the Babylonian’s story did indeed contain these details

and that they were subsequently skipped by the Hebrew translator. As stated, it is likely that David b. Zakkai's status at the authorities was enhanced after the sons of Neḥīrā left the scene; and it is also possible that Saadia's situation deteriorated after the change of rulers (al-Muqtadir died in 932), and he was forced to seek a reconciliation with the exilarch.

Joseph b. Jacob b. Saṭṭā continued, as stated, being gaon in Sura along with Saadia, this was apparently part of the agreement. In this matter, what Sherira writes in his *Letter*, suits what Nathan the Babylonian writes, noting that from now on, Joseph b. Jacob "stayed at home; nevertheless, the *hōq* (i.e., the regular payment) that he took as head of the yeshiva was not stopped, but sent to him at his home". Joseph b. Jacob remained gaon after Saadia's death, and, as stated, the Sura yeshiva declined. From what Sherira Gaon wrote in his *Letter*, it is implied that Joseph b. Jacob had a controversy with Aaron ha-Kohen (Khalaf) when the latter was gaon in Pumbedita (943-960); also implied, is that it was Aaron ha-Kohen who caused the closing of the Sura yeshiva. Joseph b. Jacob was forced to retire from Sura (or from Baghdad), went to Baṣra and lived there until his death. Because of this a number of modern students assumed that he founded a yeshiva in Baṣra, but this is not borne out by the sources.¹⁴⁵

5. Aaron ha-Kohen Gaon and the controversies at the Pumbedita yeshiva

(146) Even before the controversy between Saadia Gaon and David b. Zakkai abated, in February 937 (as we have seen, the parties to the controversies were two central Pumbedita figures—the gaon Kohen Šedeq and Khalaf b. Sarjāda, i.e., Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph), Kohen Šedeq died, in Sel. 1246, AD 935 (or, according to Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, a year later, in 936; the former year seems to be the correct one). Serving as geonim after Kohen Šedeq, were Šemaḥ b. Kafnai (935-937), and Ḥananiah b. Judah (Sherira Gaon's father, 937-943). After Ḥananiah's death, there were two candidates for the Pumbedita gaonate. The first was the chief judge of the Pumbedita Court, °Amram b. Mīshoi, *rōsh kallā* (in another version: Menashe, but Mīshoi is correct, because it is the *lectio difficilior*, Mīshoi being an uncommon name, the Persian form [apparently pronounced: Mishoia, or Mishawayh] of Moshe). °Amram was the brother of Sherira Gaon's mother, i.e., the brother-in-law of the deceased gaon, Ḥananiah. The name, b. Mshoi (*sic*) was preserved in the preamble of a letter Sherira Gaon sent to Ephraim b. Šedāqā, the (maternal) grandfather of Sahlān b. Abraham, the leader of the Babylonians in Fustat. It is virtually certain that

¹⁴⁵ See Nathan the Babylonian, in: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 81ff.; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 113; Ibn Da'ūd, *The Book of Trad.*, 41. The theme of beating with a shoe is found also in the Judeo-Arabic story about Bustanai (*supra*, n. 49); see the editor's notes, in Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, in the English Part (G. Cohen), and see *ibid.*, 130, a bibliographical list of previous studies on this dispute; the supposition of Cohen regarding Judah Zakkai is opposite to my own as expressed here; his view is that Ibn Da'ūd had an additional source before him, unknown to Nathan the Babylonian. This pair of names, Judah and Zakkai, is often met in that period, and there are more instances of it. The yeshiva alleged to have existed in Baṣra: Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 170f., and see more references there, in note 74. See also Fleischer, *Zion*, 49 (1984), 375f. and n. 4, where the high level of Saadia's Hebrew is pointed out, as he used it in his polemics surrounding the disputes here described.

the missing name in that fragment can be completed, ⁶Amram. There, ⁶Amram b. Mishoi is called "the grandson of Isaac (i.e., of Isaac Ṣādōq) head of the Yeshiva of the Diaspora". The other candidate was Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, who seven years earlier had sought, unsuccessfully, to become gaon in Sura. Evidently, there was a severe controversy over this issue in the Pumbedita yeshiva. We do not know whether the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, was still alive at the time. Sherira Gaon was very sparing in his report, and, as I have already noted, he sufficed with a mention of the fact that Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph was not one of the yeshiva scholars, but a merchant. Mevasser Gaon made a place of honor for him at the yeshiva, "in the *dārā rabbā*", "the great row" of the yeshiva, and evidently it was Sherira's intention to say that Mevasser had appointed him *alūf*, or *rōsh kallā*. He adds: "He was not suitable for the gaonate". Sherira then describes Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph's victory over ⁶Amram b. Mīshoi: He bypassed him (over the position of gaon), because he "was very brazen, therefore our Lord and Master ⁶Amram, the chief judge, was afraid of him"; In the end, ⁶Amram fell flat on his face: "he went and reclined before him". It should be noted that there were ups and downs in the relations between Sherira Gaon's family and Aaron ha-Kohen. Among the figures he attacked, Saadia Gaon mentions in his *Sefer ha-galui*, among those who belonged to the party of David b. Zakkai and Khalaf b. Sarjāda, someone named Ḥananiah, whom he refers to as Ananiah' (apparently from *anīnūt*, mourning); Harkavy has already noted that the intention was apparently to Ḥananiah, Sherira's father (which seems likely, and Mann's reservations on this point are unjustified). In other words, it appears that Ḥananiah, Sherira's father, was then one of the supporters of the Pumbedita gaon, Kohen Ṣedeq, and also of David b. Zakkai and Khalaf b. Sarjāda, in their struggle against Saadia. It appears that after this controversy over the gaonate, when Aaron ha-Kohen became the gaon in Pumbedita, Sherira reconciled with him, as his son, Hayy, says in one of his responsa: "... and we recall some Sabbath days when we would pray at the home of R. Aaron Gaon, of blessed memory....". This refers to the period between 943 and 960, when Hayy was still a youngster, and his father, Sherira Gaon, was certainly included in the words, "we would pray". One may therefore assume that in the episode ending the controversy, the condition that Sherira would inherit his maternal uncle's position and be chief judge of the Pumbedita Court after him, was included. Thus Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*: "... at that time (i.e., when Aaron b. Joseph ha-Kohen passed away) I was chief judge, and did not become gaon until he (Nehemiah) passed away", i.e., according to him, he continued in the post of chief judge also during the gaonate of Nehemiah Gaon. In one of his letters, he reminds one of the Pumbedita supporters in Egypt, about the good days "when our Lord and Master Aaron Gaon was alive", and "you conveyed the contributions of the westerners and of all of the land of Ifrīqiya, and the fifths".

Along with the peace and tranquility that pervaded in Pumbedita between ⁶Amram b. Mishoi and his sister's son, Sherira, and the new gaon, Aaron ha-Kohen, a party strongly opposed to the gaon arose, the central figure being Nehemiah, Kohen Ṣedeq's son. Sherira explicitly says so in his *Letter*: "After a few (years?—missing in the text) our Lord and Master Nehemiah, son of our Lord and Master Kohen Ṣedeq, collided with him"

(i.e., with Aaron ha-Kohen). Sherira adds that the controversy erupted, even though Nehemiah had initially been reconciled with the gaon and accepted his authority.

We may assume that the initial reconciliation—at least to some extent—was a continuation of the three-way pact that had been reached between the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, and the two Pumbedita personages, the gaon Kohen Šedeq, and Aaron b. Joseph, in the struggle against Saadia. On the one hand, it is clear that the relations between Aaron b. Joseph (i.e., Khalaf b. Sarjāda) and the family of Kohen Šedeq, were cool from the outset, and soon degenerated into an open feud. It appears that Sherira Gaon had no particular liking for Nehemiah, for he adds that because Nehemiah was alone in the struggle, without supporters, Aaron ha-Kohen had the upper hand: “our Lord and Master Aaron had the advantage over him because none of the scholars left R. Aaron”.

We can understand how two camps developed in Pumbedita. One was the camp of Sherira and his family, descendants of the gaon Isaac Šādōq (810-812), and their in-laws, the descendants of the gaon Palṭoi b. Abayē (842-858). Sherira was the great grandson of Isaac Šādōq (°Amram b. Mīshoi, Sherira’s uncle, and Sherira’s mother were his grandchildren), and descendants of Sherira’s father’s family may also have been at the yeshiva. The other camp, was that of Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq and Hophni, Nehemiah’s brother, and their relatives. Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, who had come to rule in Pumbedita, was foreign to both of the camps. Nevertheless, after the initial controversy before the appointment, they apparently reached a coexistence and compromise agreement with the one camp, while a deep rivalry quickly ensued with the other. The roots of this rivalry were relatively early, for we have seen that it is Mevasser Gaon, the adversary of Kohen Šedeq (father of Nehemiah and Hophni), who had brought Aaron ha-Kohen to Pumbedita, and it was he who had granted him a distinguished status therein. Aaron ha-Kohen’s negative attitude to Kohen Šedeq and his descendants after him, is also reflected in the fact that it was not Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq who was appointed his chief judge, but first °Amram b. Mīshoi, and then, °Amram’s sister’s son, Sherira b. Ḥananiah Gaon.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ See Sherira, *Letter*, 120f., the preamble to Sherira’s letter: 26, and see the preamble to this document. See also Ibn Da’ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 43. Ananiah-Ḥananiah, see in Chapira, *REJ*, 68 (1914), 9, and Harkavy, *Zikkārōn la-rish.*, V, 166 and also, 144; Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 166; see Hayy’s responsum, in *Sefer ha-eskōl* (of Abraham b. Isaac of Narbonne), 5. See Sherira’s letter, 20, line 10. It is worth mentioning that, in his letter, Sherira Gaon does not call Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph but by his Hebrew name, not Khalaf b. Sarjāda. The name Sarjāda (sometimes: Sharjadū) was not common in those days. Harkavy, in Grätz (Hebrew), III, 291 n. 82, pointed out that one has to pronounce Sarjadū, and mentions some various versions of this name. It might be related to Aramaic SRGYD in the Palestinian Talmud, *Shabbāt* viii, 11b, where it seems to mean the ‘tooth’ of the lock (see the following references). It should perhaps be compared to Syriac SRGD (see Syriac dictionaries, especially Brockelmann’s). Its meaning in these days might have been: a scribe. See more on this subject: Perles, *Festschr. Schwarz*, 303, who was looking for a Greek origin; but, in that same Jubilee Volume, 575, Krauss denied such an option. Malter, *Saadia*, 428 (who, without any reason, cites Krauss), assumed that it meant: a ruler (for drawing lines), proposing to read it: *surgedā*, which has no base in any source. See more on the various spellings of the name in the sources: Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 71 n. 34; Auerbach,

(147) Something of the spirit of Sherira's party at the time of Aaron ha-Kohen's gaonate, is displayed through a very interesting letter written by a man (whom I have already mentioned above), whose name can be surmised—Naḥshōn (below, sec. 239)—who calls himself in the letter, "the grandson of Ṭōv", in the spring (March or April) of 953. The grandfather, Ṭōv, chief judge in Pumbedita, was the son of Isaac Şemaḥ b. Paṭṭoi Gaon b. Abayē. The writer, on his maternal side, was the great grandson of Isaac Şādōq, gaon of Sura, the son of Jesse. The writer's grandfather, Moshe, or Mīshoi, was the brother of Naḥshōn Gaon b. Isaac Şādōq. On this side he was Sherira's cousin, and a descendant of families that had given rise to geonim and chief judges of the Court, in both Pumbedita and Sura. He was clearly a member of Sherira's party. Since the letter was first published by Cowley, in 1905, it has been the subject of many discussions. It contains bitter complaints about the family's dire economic state. Monies sent from Spain to Pumbedita were not properly apportioned; someone was discriminating against the writer's family; someone was stealing the money; they did not get their due, and even what they got, was only given to them after the intervention of the exilarch, Solomon (Solomon b. Josiah b. Zakkai; his father Josiah, as mentioned, had been Saadia's ally in his struggle against the exilarch, David b. Zakkai, his own brother). The letter was sent to Spain, apparently Aspāmiya, i.e., Christian Spain (see above, sec. 128). The writer mentions the authority his father had over the Spanish communities, especially regarding the appointment of judges. The letter contains extreme praise for the financiers, the sons of Aaron. Unlike the opinion of other students, I believe that the 'robber' about whom the writer complains, was, in fact, the gaon, Aaron ha-Kohen, for the gaon was the brother-in-law of these sons of Aaron, to whom he was thankful, and the writer does not reveal the name of the robber, or robbers. The writer rather discloses that the yeshiva was divided, and it is obvious that the writer's party was maintaining independent contact with the Spaniards. It should be assumed that the members of Nehemiah b. Kohen Şedeq's party carried on similar activities, and it is not unlikely that it is they who were the people whom the writer accuses of robbing the money, for, as will be made clear below, Nehemiah declared himself gaon, some years before the death of Aaron ha-Kohen. Furthermore, it should be noted that the writer crosses from the plural to the singular, and may have been writing, not in the name of a party, but in his own name, and for his own sake.

Further down, we find statements written by Nehemiah b. Kohen Şedeq, reflecting his and his party's controversy, in all its severity, with the party of Aaron ha-Kohen, in an ex post facto complaint, for most of it was written after the death (in August, 960) of Aaron ha-Kohen. An exception to this, is a letter to Fustat written while the gaon was still alive, of which only the first part has been preserved. Therein, it is clear that Nehemiah was proclaimed gaon during the time of the controversy, for here is how he refers to himself at the head of the letter: "Nehemiah ha-Kohen head of the Yeshiva of the Diaspora". His brother, Hophni, had the title of chief judge of the Court (even though, according to the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon, he,

Festschr. Wohlgenut, 3 n. 12a. On the disputes in Pumbedita, cf. Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 174f.; Sherira, *Letter*, 121, notes a, b; *ibid.*, 132.

Sherira, served in this position): "... Shālōm.... from us and from the chief judge of the Court, our brother, son of the gaon, our father". He also mentions his son, Tōv: "And from Tōv, our boy", and also the sons of Hophni: Samuel, Isaac, and Hayyim. Further along, he explicitly mentions his rival, Aaron ha-Kohen, in a pejorative manner: "The evil Khalaf b. Sarjāda, of infamous wickedness, whose lies everyone knows, he not only stole a contribution meant for the scholars, he even feeds off food consecrated for the orphans and the destitute". Further down, words are missing from the sheet, but there was a complaint against Aaron ha-Kohen for appealing "to the rulers, and with the brazen boys that he feeds to get them to bark at us". "The brazen boys", are, beyond doubt, Sherira and his party, for so Nehemiah also refers to them in his next letter. Nehemiah's demand that Aaron ha-Kohen give him money that arrived from Fustat, was unmet: "We demanded it from him and could not get it out of his hand". The writer does not care a whit for the Aaron ha-Kohen's rulings: "As if this isn't enough, he also twists his rulings and takes...." (bribes?).

After the death of Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, a compromise appears to have been reached, and Sherira's party agreed to Nehemiah's appointment as gaon. Nevertheless, before long a dispute broke out, with Nehemiah attacking in his letters both the deceased gaon, and Sherira and his associates, the members of his party. In November 962, he wrote to the Babylonian community in Fustat, demanding that the addressees send "the contributions and the allowances and the fifths, just as their fathers of blessed memory did before them, just as you did when the deceased was still alive"; the deceased was Aaron ha-Kohen, whom Nehemiah does not even mention by name, neither does he add the blessings accorded to the deceased. Further down, he is self laudatory because all the people of the yeshiva recognized his gaonate and accepted his authority: "We have informed you about the novelty that after the deceased's departure all the scholars came back to us, they sit before us (i.e., accept our authority), and have sworn their loyalty to us, and accepted our gaonate in their great numbers". It appears that the family of the sons of Aaron, the Baghdadī financiers, the grandchildren of Aaron b. ʿAmram, Aaron and Moses sons of Abraham, granted recognition to the new gaon, despite the earlier rivalry, and Nehemiah asked his addressees to collect the allowances and the fifths and send them, "all of them by the hand of the sons of Aaron, may God preserve them". However, he fumed against the rebellious party and excommunicated them: "We have sent via the hand of our cherished Lord and Master Solomon the Elder, our esteemed attorney, known as b. Tabnai, an open letter to the communities with a writ of excommunication about those two boys, the brazen dogs, Kaḥshōn and Shevīrā the wicked and errant; support the call and strengthen the people to do all that is written therein". Further down: "Stay away from those who cause erring, who are banned, do not accept their writings, reject their arrogance, do not refer to them, for there is no good in them". Kaḥshōn and Shevīrā are obviously Naḥshōn and Sherira (the root of *kaḥshōn* meaning: lie, and of *shevīrā*: to break). We have no information about Naḥshōn, but he was certainly a son of those families from whom Sherira's forefathers, the geonim, were descended, and it is not beyond the realm of possibility, as I

have already noted, that he was “the grandson of Tōv”, whose letter I referred to above (see also below, sec. 239).

An “open letter” had indeed been sent to many communities, certainly the Babylonian communities, and the letter whose contents I discussed above was also sent to many communities. A similar version sent to the community of Safāqūš, also in November 962, to a person who was certainly one of its main figures, Nissin b. Benjamin, has been preserved. We also have a fragment of a letter with a similar content and demands, to a member of the Babylonian community in Fustat, apparently from the beginning of 963. In another letter, Nehemiah mentions “*peshīfām* (i.e., ‘open’ letters meant for the community) that we sent to the city last year”, and he wants to know whether they were received and what was done with them.

Unfortunately, what the opposing side wrote has not been preserved, except for Sherira’s terse and reserved statements in his *Letter*, that I showed above. In the two letters he wrote to Fustat, one near the death of Aaron ha-Kohen, while still chief judge of the yeshiva’s Court, to the communities of Spain and North Africa, and the other after the death of the gaon, to Fustat, Sherira requested financial aid. The Fustat addressee, as a youth, had lived in Baghdad and studied under Sherira’s father, Hananiah Gaon. Sherira complains about someone who was envious of him, “and we lost our sustenance”; he mentions that Aaron ha-Kohen “would give us and the scholars just a touch of the much”, i.e., he only allocated them a small part of the monies arriving for the Pumbedita yeshiva. Sherira also wrote *peshīfām* to Fustat to the community, via an emissary whose name was Abū Ishāq (i.e., apparently Abraham) b. Sheriyar (a Persian name, Shahriyar); and another that he also sent via the same emissary to Fustat, meant for the Qayrawān community, asking that the addressee forward it there. He maintained a yeshiva within a yeshiva, he wrote, and continued the activities of “the geonim of Israel, our forefathers; we sit from morning till night judging... them and teaching them both individually and as a group”. In the letter (to Fustat) there was a complaint about someone who was sending letters to Fustat against him and his party—so it would seem, for the sheet is torn, yet the words: “.... we, the oppressed, who love you; had we known who the sender was and who was doing it, we would spread a....”, are preserved. Nevertheless, as he mentions in his *Letter*, Sherira had not yet declared himself gaon—in opposition to the gaonate of Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq, and it appears that he was much more reserved than his rival, whom we have seen complaining about Sherira’s letters. We also have a fragment of a letter of Sherira’s, of a later time, where he returns, so it appears, to the controversy issue: “.... after our father the gaon, may he repose in Paradise....; like Korah who sowed dissension against Moses.... And obliterate his name and the names of his agents”.

I have surveyed a series of many fierce and harsh controversies, which began at the end of the ninth century and lasted until the second half of the tenth century. I have devoted a separate discussion to these fierce disputes, because relatively many fragments of the many polemical, complaining, and derogatory letters that were written (and many of them copied) have been preserved from that tumultuous period. Yet one should bear in mind, that it was not an extraordinarily stormy time, but that not so many sources

have remained concerning Babylonia, neither from the period prior to the one I have described here, nor from the period afterwards. But, there is no doubt that each one of them was no less turbulent.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ The letter of Ṭōv's grandson: 13, and see references in the preamble to this letter, and see especially *f*, lines 5ff., and also in the continuation. Nehemiah becoming gaon while Aaron ha-Kohen was still alive: 14, and also: 15, 16, 17, 18. See 19*d*, lines 20ff.; 20, lines 10ff. The later letter (apparently to the Yemen): 28*i*, lines 2ff. The severe complaints on distress and destitution, and the loss of properties mentioned by the writers, should be grasped against the background of general penury at the end of al-Muttaqī's days, beginning with the severe drought of the year 944, and the state of disturbance and interval turmoils during the gradual rise in power of the Būyids in the caliphate. Cf. Levy, *A Baghdad Chronicle*, 151; Busse, *Chalif*, 23-40, and see the studies on the letters mentioned above and on the dispute between Nehemiah and Sherira: Cowley, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 399; 19 (1906/7), 104; Poznanski, *JQR*, *ibid.*, 399ff.; Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/18), 341-347; *idem*, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 230f.; *idem*, *Hazofeh*, 11 (1926/7), 148; *Texts*, I, 75ff.; *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 173ff.; Sherira, *Letter*, 121, and Lewin's notes there; also, 132ff.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SECTS

1. *The early sects*

(148) Abū ʿĪsā was apparently the earliest of a series of figures to whom prophetic, and even messianic, pretensions have been ascribed. The sources generally refer to him as ABŪ ʿĪSĀ AL-İŞFAHĀNĪ, however, there are various opinions regarding his real name. The earliest information is that of Shahrastānī, taken from the (now lost) book of Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (mid-ninth century), *al-Maqālāt* (essays). He notes that his name was Isaac (İshāq) b. Jacob, but others say his name was ʿUfid Elūhīm (intending: ʿovēd elōhīm, worshipper of God), or, the Arabic source adds, ʿAbdallah. Ibn Ḥazm suggests that his name was Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā, i.e. the names of two prophets, the prophet of Islam, himself, and ʿĪsā, Jesus in Arabic, who, as is known, Islam includes among the prophets. Qirqisānī even calls him ʿbdyh, Obadiah (i.e., Hebrew for ʿAbdallah), and Judah Hadāsī, in *Eshkōl ha-kofer*, writes: “Abū ʿĪsī (read: ʿĪsā, as in Arabic), who was Obadiah al-İşfahānī”. Here we should cite what Poznanski notes about Ibn Ḥazm’s statement, that his name was Muḥammad, which means that he became a Muslim, for only a Muslim would call himself by the Prophet’s name. From this Poznanski concluded that the two names, ʿĪsā and Muḥammad, were affixed to him to emphasize that he indeed considered the two of them as prophets. Yet it should be remembered that this was a seceding sect, one that was in conflict even with the Muslim regime, as we shall see below, thus the rules applicable to most people should not be applied to the name Abū ʿĪsā. In fact, only someone who related to Muḥammad and Jesus as men of flesh and blood, even though he saw them as prophets, could chose for himself—as Goldziher has shown—the name of Abū ʿĪsā, the father of Jesus, for something of the like is unthinkable for a Christian believing in the original Christian faith; there is even a Muslim tradition that ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb opposed the *kunya* Abū ʿĪsā, because Jesus did not have a father.

As his sobriquet shows, Abū ʿĪsā was from İsfahān. Some Arabic sources indeed note that he was originally from Nisibis, but in all events he lived and flourished in İsfahān. As we shall see (below, sec. 298), a large Jewish community resided in İsfahān. One of the participants in the conquest of İsfahān, at the end of AH 21 (i.e., AD 642), tells that the distance between the camp of the Muslims and al-Yahūdiyya (the section of the city populated by Jews) was a *farsakh* (*farsakh*: about six kilometers), and the Muslim warriors would often visit there. Once he saw the Jews there dancing and beating drums, and a Jewish friend explained that they were awaiting the king of the Jews, who would arrive the next day, and with his help they would defeat the Arabs. During the night he waited on

the roof of the Jew's house, and indeed, at sunrise, an army appeared, led by a man whose head was wreathed in flowers and perfumed herbs, and the Jews greeted him with dances and drumming. It was Ibn Sa'īd. He entered the town, and since then nobody saw him any more. It seems that there is an historical kernel in this strange story, belonging to the time of the conquest, and the matter of Jews' loyalty to the defeated Persian regime about which I have written (see above, sec. 63), and this story should not be connected, as Fischel did, with the fact that Abū 'Īsā set up his camp in Iṣfahān. It should be added, that the Muslims believed that the *dajjāl*, the mythological false messiah who would rise against the Muslims at the end of days, would come from the Jews of Iṣfahān. For some generations afterwards, Abū 'Īsā's followers were referred to as Iṣfahānis (*al-iṣbahāniyya*). Maimonides, too, in his *Iggeret tēmān*, wrote about "a man who arose across the river.... and afterwards the Jews of Iṣfahān suffered terribly".

There are two contradictory views about the time of Abū 'Īsā. The earlier one, it seems, is that of Shahrastānī, who took it, as stated, from Ibn al-Warrāq, who says that Abū 'Īsā began propagandizing at the time of the last Damascene caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimār (744-750), i.e., in the forties of the eighth century. Qirqisānī, on the other hand, puts it earlier, at the time of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (685-705). Also implied in Shahrastānī, is that the height of his activity was during the time of the Abbasids, i.e., that of al-Manṣūr (754-775). Harkavy definitely preferred Qirqisānī's version, because he sought to emphasize the connection between Abū 'Īsā and the onset of Karaism, i.e., that first there was Abū 'Īsā and then 'Anan, whom one used to consider the first Karaite; he considered Qirqisānī's account of the beginning of Karaism to be trustworthy. On the other hand, Friedländer thought it more likely that the movement arose at the end of the Umayyad dynasty, when the rampages of the Shiites rose against the Damascene rulers.¹⁴⁸

(149) According to the earlier source used by Shahrastānī, Abū 'Īsā's contemporaries and his retinue believed that he was capable of performing miraculous acts; he himself contended that he was a prophet and harbinger of the messiah whom they were awaiting (*al-muntaẓar*, a term used by the

¹⁴⁸ The main sources about Abū 'Īsā and his sect are: Shahrastānī, 168; Ibn Hazm, *Milal*, I, 99; Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 12, 51-53; cf. Poznanski, *REJ*, 54 (1907), 277. Goldziher wrote, following Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, XIV, 142 (on Mughīra b. Shu'ba), in *ZDMG*, 51 (1897), 256ff., that the *kunya* Abū 'Īsā was in use, despite Caliph 'Umar's blame, in the Muslim high society, and he offers examples there; the origin in Nisibis: Khawārizmī, 34; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīṣ*, 177, the editor's note, based on a manuscript of المصباح المنير, الفيومي, the joy of the Jews of Iṣfahān: Abū Nu'aym, *Akhbār*, I, 22f.; cf. Fischel, *Starr Mem. Vol.*, 114. See Maqrīzī, *Khitaṭ*, III, 375, who writes that the Jews of Iṣfahān themselves assumed that it is Abū 'Īsā who was the *dajjāl*. It should be remembered that in the Christian world as well one was assuming that the Jews expect the appearance of the antichrist, and very strangely, they allegedly expected the antichrist to be born by a nun, see Symeon Magister in *MPG*, 109, p. 732; this birth was due to happen at the beginning of the ninth century; cf. Starr, *Jews*, 104. Muqaddasī, *Aqālim*, 299: the *dajjāl* will emerge from their market; however, it is not clear whether he meant the Jews of Iṣfahān. See Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 12, and cf. Nemoy, *HUCA*, 7 (1930), 328; Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 203ff.; Harkavy in Grätz (Hebrew), III, 502; Maimonides in his letter to Yemen (Shailat ed.), 109: the man who arose at the beginning of Islam (*fi ṣadr al-islām*) claiming to be the messiah. See more on Abū 'Īsā and his sect: Wasserstrom, *SI*, 75:57, 1992; Erder, *JSAI*, 20:162, 1996.

Muslims, especially the Shiites, in regard to the *mahdī*, possessed of divine guidance, whom they awaited), for, according to him, the messiah had five messengers, and he would send them one after the other. The messiah was above all people and on a higher level than a prophet. Since he was the messenger of such a lofty being, even his messenger Abū ʿĪsā was above all people, and everyone was required to believe him. Then he contended that actually the heralding messenger (*al-dāʿī*, the proclaimer of the belief, a central term in the lexicon of the extreme Shiites, the Ismaʿīlis) was also a messiah. Also according to Qirqisānī, Abū ʿĪsā claimed that he was a prophet, but Qirqisānī does not mention the issue of “the messenger of the messiah”. Word of the mission is found again in Bīrūnī, who knew enough to explain that the contention regarding the messengers of the messiah originates in what the Jews find in the fifth book of the Torah, which he cites in Hebrew, in Arabic transliteration: “And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods” (Deuteronomy 31:18; the copiers apparently misread Bīrūnī’s original text). Abū ʿĪsā’s followers made the computation and arrived at the year 1335; the intention here is apparently to the *gimatria* (numerical value of the Hebrew letters) of the Hebrew text *hastēr astūr*, “I will surely hide my face”, and, according to Bīrūnī, they claimed that the beginning of this period is when the Temple sacrifices ceased, and prophecy and the messengers ended. It should be assumed that he meant to say: the destruction of the First Temple, thus the end of the period would be in the first half of the eighth century AD, i.e., in the days of the Umayyad caliphs.

In the manner of prophets, the man would have to be, if not a stutterer like Moses, at least an unlearned person, for he did not construct things from what he had learned, but spoke what God put into his mouth. According to Qirqisānī, this, indeed, was claimed: people said he was a tailor; it was also said that he was an ignoramus (المی), an illiterate man, yet even though no one had ever taught him, he showed everyone books and tomes—i.e., a true divine revelation.

Out of all of his views on the principles of faith, especially salient is the recognition of the status of Jesus, whom he regarded as a prophet. According to Ibn Ḥazm, Abū ʿĪsā considered Jesus to be a prophet who was sent to the Children of Isrāʾīl. As to Muḥammad, he also considered him a prophet, sent to the children of Ismāʿīl and the rest (or: all) of the Arabs, just as Job was sent to his own people, and Balaam to the Moabites.

There is a resounding reverberation in the sources for the information that Abū ʿĪsā recognized Muḥammad’s prophetic mission, yet only to the Arabs. Except for the above statements of Ibn Ḥazm, this information, perhaps coming from Qirqisānī, was copied by a number of Arabic writers. There were seceding sects in Islam, who considered this recognition in a positive light, such as one of the Khārijī sects, the Ibādīs, whose leader, Zayd b. Abī Unaysa (as it should be pronounced) would say: “If whether a Jew or a Christian, says: ‘There is no God, but Allah, and Muḥammad is His messenger to the Arabs, but not to us’, as say the ‘ʿĪsawīyya’, among the Jews, he is indeed among the believers in the servants of the exalted God”. However, this view did not express the beliefs of most Muslims and the major Islamic scholars. The Qurʾān, itself, seems to phrase

Muḥammad's mission in a similar manner (sura 62, *al-Jum'ā*, first two verses: "... the holy king (*al-qudūs*, one of the Hebrew loan words in the Qur'ān), the mighty (*al-'azīz*), the wise, he who sent to the ignorants (*al-ummīyīn*, from the word *umma*, which may therefore also indicate another interpretation, such as: belonging to the community) a messenger from among them, to read his verses to them and purify them and teach them the Book and the Wisdom (*al-ḥikma*), even though they were previously imprisoned in total error". However, this is only apparent; in fact, from the beginning Islam considered Muḥammad the last (the seal) of the prophets, whose mission was universal. On the other hand, the idea that Muḥammad was sent as a prophet to the Arabs was not unusual or even unacceptable for the Jews, for they had the precedent of Balaam; we see this view also in a *midrash* written during the Umayyad period, "The Secrets (*nistārōt*) of R. Simeon b. Yoḥai": "(God) appoints over them a prophet according to His will".

Ibn Tāhir, writing at the beginning of the eleventh century, attacks the view of the *karrāmīyya* sect, that it is sufficient for someone to say that there is no God but Allah, and that Muḥammad is his messenger, in order to be considered a Muslim. Accordingly, he says, one would have to accept as Muslims the 'Isāwīyya and the Mushkānīyya among the Jews, for so they say and they say that what (Muḥammad) said is true, but he was sent only to the Arabs.¹⁴⁹

(150) According to Shahrastānī, Abū 'Īsā was severe in his proscriptions, especially in regard to food, when absolutely forbidding the eating of any animal, "whether fowl or cattle". Furthermore, he established the custom of praying ten times a day. According to Qirqisānī, he totally forbade divorce "just as the Zadokites and Christians have forbidden it", and decreed that they should pray seven times a day (not ten, as in Shahrastānī's source), as prescribed by the Bible, "Seven times a day do I praise thee" (Psalms 119:164). Qirqisānī also cites the interdiction on eating meat, and also drinking (i.e., of wine), even though there is no

¹⁴⁹ Shahrastānī, see in the previous note; cf. Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/3), 263ff. Qirqisānī, see the previous note; cf. Nemoy, as in the previous note. Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 15; the ignorance: besides Qirqisānī—as mentioned—cf. Nemoy, *ibid.*, Friedländer, *ibid.*, 279. Harkavy, in Grätz (Hebrew), III, 501. Ibn Ḥazm, as in the previous note; Poznanski, *JQR*, 16 (1903/4), 765ff. Qirqisānī also mentions that Abū 'Īsā considered that Jesus was a prophet; cf. Friedländer, *ibid.*, 240; Sharf, *Byz. J.*, 62; the Ibādīs: Ibn Ḥazm, *Milal*, IV, 188; see more details in Schreiner, *ZDMG*, 42 (1888), 619, who cites al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ*, V, 215 (his commentary to *sūrat ibrahīm*; and *ibid.*, 659f. citing al-Juwaynī on the Jewish 'Isāwīyya sect, who agree that Muḥammad is a prophet, but only for the Arabs. Al-Juwaynī quotes it as an example in the matter of the *naskh*, the 'dislocation' done by God who dislocates parts of the divine revelation ('the book') and replaces them by different ones, like the dislocation of the *tawrah* by the *qur'ān*. The *nistārōt*, see in Jellinek, *Bēt ha-m.*, III, 78ff.; see Gil, *History*, 62 n. 65. See Ibn Tāhir, *Al-farq*, 231, 280 and cf. Schreiner, *REJ*, 29 (1894), 206. See more similar ideas: al-Jī, 216; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīṣ*, I, 177 (the editor mentions there that he does not know who was the person who held such ideas); see also Goldziher, *REJ*, 28 (1894), 91, who cites from a book by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, written around 800, on Muslim war law, *kitāb al-siyar al-kabīr*, MS Leiden 1775, see *GAL*, I, 179; see Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ*, I, 151; al-Shaybānī ascribes this view on Muḥammad's prophecy to all Jews in Iraq, not only to the 'Isāwīyya; possibly, this idea about the Jews of Iraq stems from Sarakhsī, who flourished in the second half of the eleventh century. See also: Poznanski, *JQR*, 16 (1904), 770f.; Kister, *JSAI*, 5 (1984), 43f.

mention of it in Scripture, but Abū ʿĪsā claimed that so he was told by God, and that it is prophecy.

Less acceptable of all the information provided by the sources, is the matter of the battle supposedly waged by Abū ʿĪsā and his men against the army of Caliph al-Manṣūr. Shahrastānī preserves two versions of the battle, that he combined together. One version states simply that Abū ʿĪsā and his men (a large army, made up of Jews) waged battle against the soldiers of al-Manṣūr at Rayy, in Persia, where he and his men were killed. The other version tells that during the battle, Abū ʿĪsā drew a line in the ground around his men with a stick taken from a perfume tree, and told them that as long as they stayed within the circle their enemies could not harm them; indeed, the enemies drew back from this circle, because they were afraid that it might be a kind of amulet, or that a spell was cast therein. In the end, Abū ʿĪsā left the circle by himself astride his steed, fought and slayed many Muslims, and rode “to the sons of Mūsā b. ʿAmram (i.e., the Jews) beyond the dunes in order to tell them the word of God”. We have no additional independent information to shed light upon the truth and historical kernel of this legend. As Goldziher has already shown, the story of the circle was undoubtedly influenced by the story about the Prophet’s cousin, al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām; who, when under attack (the nature of the attackers is unclear, *jinn*s perhaps?), the Prophet drew a circle on the ground with his foot, and advised him to enter it, both of them did so and they survived.

Qirqisānī describes the episode of this battle very briefly, saying only that Abū ʿĪsā revolted against the regime and organized an army of followers to fight against it, and that he was killed in the fray; but some of his adherents say that he was not killed in the battle, but took refuge in a cave on the mountain, and nothing more is known of him. Qirqisānī does not note the location of that battle. With time the battle assumed impressive proportions, and Maimonides, writing about Abū ʿĪsā (without citing his name) more than four hundred years later, knew that he “set out” on his war along with “ten thousand Jews” and by so doing brought terrible suffering down upon the Jews of Iṣfahān (not Rayy, as in Shahrastānī’s source).

A distant echo of the Abū ʿĪsā affair is in the statement of the Egyptian Muslim legal scholar, Ashhab b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Jaʿdī (ca. 800). He was asked about the judgment of a Jew who claims to be a prophet sent by God, i.e., that he was audacious enough to think that there could be a prophet after the Prophet of Islam. The answer: It should be demanded of him that he recant, if he refuses he is to be executed. There is no doubt that this affair is shrouded in a thick mist. According to Qirqisānī, not only did Abū ʿĪsā recognize Jesus and Muḥammad as prophets, sent, each one, to his people, but even commanded his followers to read the New Testament (*al-injīl*) and the Qurʾān and study the commentaries of each one. He argued that these books led the Muslims and Christians to the fear of Heaven, just as the Jews’ books brought the Jews to the fear of Heaven. However, Qirqisānī adds, Abū ʿĪsā did not accept the prophecy of the two figures out of a respect for their message and the content of their prophecy, but because he knew that if he denied their prophecy, people would reject even stronger his own prophecy. In other words, he hoped that the recognition of the prophecy of the two would help further his own success; yet, in the end, he was disappointed. We have no substantial information about what led to

the clash between Abū ʿĪsā and the regime, if indeed something like that had happened. Apparently, a focus of a strong controversy developed, something to be probably found in the total contradiction of the intentions and desires—at least in the eyes of the regime—of the movement's leader. The explanation might be found in what Shahrastānī notes, that Abū ʿĪsā argued that the word of God had come to him, and that God had entrusted him with the task of delivering the Jews from the clutches of the perverse nations and kings and men of evil; here there is a wide berth for assumptions, yet they belong to a general evaluation of the phenomenon of contemporary sects; therefore, I shall first survey the other developments in this field before discussing the issues of a general background and of the presumed contradictions between the sects.¹⁵⁰

(151) After Abū ʿĪsā's death, or disappearance, the movement was led by his disciple, YŪDGHĀN. Qirqīsānī has the main information about him: he, too, claimed that he was a prophet, his people even went further, believing him to be the messiah. His followers called him (in Aramaic!) *raʿyā*, the shepherd. To him, too, Qirqīsānī ascribes attributes of asceticism: his adherents frequently fasted and prayed, and denied themselves meat and wine. Moreover, the likes of which we have not seen in Abū ʿĪsā, they annulled the Sabbath and festivals of the 'Exile', i.e., when there is no Temple. Yūdghān is mentioned in some other sources as well. Shahrastānī has information that he was a Hamadhān man, "and there are those who say that his name was Judah"; he notes his opposition to the *tashbīh*, the anthropomorphization of God. Judah Hadāsī writes about "the religion of Yūdghān (thus to be read), who was a shepherd.... he instructed that he is the messiah and claimed to possess prophecy and his believers say that he is alive, not dead, and will reappear in the future.... they forbid meat and wine and the many fasts and prayers and say that the Sabbaths and festivals are gone, they are as naught". Clearly, he took this information from Qirqīsānī. Yūdghān is perhaps the Judah ha-Parsī (the Persian) mentioned by Abraham Ibn Ezra and Moses Bashiyāšī.

Birūnī is also one of the Arabic writers who mention Yūdghān, yet he does not cite his name and calls him *al-raʿī*. Yefet b. ʿAlī, in his commentary, mentions the *al-yūdghāniyya* and *al-shadghāniyya* who have abrogated the laws of impurity and purity in the Exile (i.e., after the

¹⁵⁰ See also: Qirqīsānī, as in the previous note; Hadāsī, *Eshkōl ha-k.*, 41b (noo. 97), who cites, in his peculiar Hebrew, parts taken from Qirqīsānī, without mentioning this source. The interdiction of divorce: "even if he discovered (in his wife) a matter of unlawful cohabitation, as said by the Zakokites, contrary to the orders of God (he omits the Christians) who forbade consuming meat and wine, as said regarding the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab" (Jer. 75:16). See also Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/3), 295, 298, who prefers, in the topic of the number of prayers, the version of Qirqīsānī, which is based on the Bible; he assumes that Shahrastānī added the seven prayers to the three of the Jews, arriving to ten. Indeed, there are in Qirqīsānī's book passages about the feelings of respect Abū ʿĪsā had for the Rabbanites, and that he accepted the prayer of Shemoneh ʿesreh and the reciting of Shema^c. The story of the circle: al-Ṭabarī al-Muḥibb, II, 266; cf. Goldziher, *Gesamm. Schriften*, V, 403; see also Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 205f.; Nemoy, *HUCA*, 7 (1930), 328; Maimonides' letter to Yemen (Shailat ed.), 109. Ashhab, in: Amar, *Wansharīšī*, I, 338.

destruction of the Temple), annulled the holidays, except for preserving their memory, and greatly alleviated the laws regarding non-*kasher* food.¹⁵¹

(152) Abū ʿĪsā and his disciple, Yūdghān, were the first leaders of sects in this period about whom there is information, including something about their ideas. Abū ʿĪsā's contemporary was someone about whom the information is unclear, the main thing being that he presented himself as if he was the messiah. His story is in a number of Syriac sources. Chabot was the first student who brought the Syriac sources to the attention of the scholarly world, in 1894. The statements are included in a chronicle that he then wrongly attributed to Dionysius of Tell Mahrē, and is actually from a monk of the Zūqnīn monastery. According to the chronicle, at "that time" (around 735) there appeared in the northern region (he apparently meant: northern Iraq) a deceitful man, an agent of the devil, a Christian, who enticed many Jews into believing that he was the messiah. He came from a village named Palḥat (a reading that is uncertain) around Mardā (apparently, Mardīn, in northern Iraq, about 60 kilometers north of Nisibis), and from there he moved to Bēt Shemariyā (in his French translation, Chabot writes: Shemer, a place on the east bank of the Euphrates; however, the intention seems to be to Samarra, and some thought it was: Samaria; perhaps it is Samra, in the area of the marshes, see below, sec. 286). After he became involved in a love affair with the daughter of a local Jew, he fled to Bēt Aramayē (southern Iraq), "a place of sorcery and the devil's tricks", in which he, too, became expert. He returned to Bēt Shemariyā and claimed that he was Moses who brought Israel out of Egypt and that he himself will lead them to Palestine. In the end, he ran away from there, taking with him a considerable sum of money and valuable goods that he had collected from the Jews. The Jews succeeded in hunting him down and turning him over to Caliph Hishām (Hishām *amīrā de-meheymanē*, "commander of the faithful", 724-743). He let the Jews do to that deceiver as they wished, and they crucified him. A similar, shorter, version, is in Maḥbūb (Agapius) in his Arabic chronicle; there, Mardā is Mardīn, and the events took place at an earlier time—the year 1025, AD 713/4, and the caliph was then Yazīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (720-724), and it is he who ordered the execution of the false messiah. Michael the Syrian gives the man's name—Sāwīrā, whereas an anonymous Syriac chronicle has a different version regarding his place of origin: Gaskhā (instead of Palḥat), and it says that first he stayed in al-Ruhī (which is Ruhā, Urfa, Edessa). Bar Hebraeus has a shorter version and a different order of events; it is not that Christian who was guilty, but "the

¹⁵¹ About Yūdghān, see Qirqisānī in the above places, also p. 876. Poznansky, *REJ*, 50 (1905), 17ff.; Mann, *HUCA*, 12-13 (1937/8), 412, 454; Shahrastānī, 168f.; Hadāsī (see in previous note); see Abraham Ibn Ezra in the introduction to the Torah commentary, and his commentary on Exodus 12:2; Leviticus 22:9; Numbers 3:29; Bashiyāšī, 3a; cf. Mann, *Texts*, II, 472; Yefet b. ʿAlī: Pinsker, *Liq. qadm.*, 25f. Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 15; cf. Landauer, *Gött. gel. Anz.* 1880, 783. Cf. also Nemoy, *JQR*, NS 50 (1951/60), 373, who notes the nickname, *raʿyā*, in Aramaic (not the Arabic *al-rāʿī*), that Yūdghān's disciples gave him, as cited by Qirqisānī. Friedländer (*JQR*, NS 3 [1012/3], 242) finds in the manuscript of Ibn Tāhir, that what was spoken of was *raʿīyāniyya*, but in the printed version it is only *ʿisāwīyya* and *mushkāniyya*, see Ibn Tāhir, *al-farq*, 231; Friedländer, *ibid.*, 263f., builds an assumption based on the reading *al-dāʿī* (i.e.: the preacher, a characteristic Ismaʿīlī term) instead of *al-rāʿī*. Khawārizmī (*Mafātiḥ*, 34f.) also mentions the *raʿīyya* among the Jewish sects, after the name of a man who proclaimed himself prophet (نبي) and would be called *al-rāʿī*.

Jews are those who taught me to think that way", he said to the governor when he was arrested. Brief information about a Syrian false messiah who tricked the Hebrews is found also in Theophanes and in Cedrenus.

It appears that the news about a Jewish messiah spread quickly and even reached Spain; it should be remembered that this was the period of the great conquests in Spain; in about 715, the Arabs conquered Barcelona. We find Sāwīrā, named Severus, in the eastern Christian chronicles—also in the chronicle of the Spaniard Isidorus Pacensis, bishop of Beja, in the eighth century, when speaking of the second year of the rule of the Byzantine emperor Leo III, i.e., the Isaurian, that is, in 718: the Jews were tempted then to believe that a man by the name Serenus was the messiah who would bring about their flight to "the promised land"; they believed him and abandoned all of their belongings, and the treasury seized them; Ambiza was then the ruler (we can identify him—he is ʿAnbasa Ibn Suhaym, governor of Spain, 721-726). This Severus-Serenus was also mentioned in a responsum of a gaon—Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, or ʿAmram b. Sheshnā, i.e., about 150 years later, just after the middle of the ninth century: "A deceiver who rose in our diaspora, Serini (as it should be read) was his name, who said: I am the messiah". Then the gaon lists his sins: abrogating the prayers, abrogating strict compliance with the laws of *kashrūt*, permitting the drinking of the wine of gentiles, permitting labor on the second day of the festivals, revoking the women's *ketubbōt* and the laws of incest. The gaon's responsum deals with the question about anyone living according to the ideas of this Serini, "such as those who are very heretical, when they return to the fold—are they required to perform the ritual immersion, or not?" The gaon answers that they be dealt with according to Jewish custom, and be received back into the fold, but whether there are bastards among them, should be examined, to expel those who entered into marriage against the laws of incest, and lawful *ketubbōt* should be drawn up.¹⁵²

(153) After describing Yūdhgān, Qirqisānī adds a chronological list of other sects. At first, ʿANAN THE EXILARCH, in the time of al-Manṣūr (mid-

¹⁵² The chronicle from Zūqnīn: Chabot, *REJ*, 28 (1894), 292f., and the text is, of course, included in the chronicle shortly afterwards published by *idem*, *Chronicon*, 28f. See the Arabic version in Maḥbūb's chronicle (Agapius, *PO*, 244); see Michael the Syrian (text), 456; the name of the caliph is not given there, only 'the ruler'; Bar Hebraeus (Bedjan), 118 (Budge), 109. See Theophanes, 401; Cedrenus, 793; the article Barshalūna in *EL*² (by Seybold, Huici Miranda); see the matter of Serenus: *Continuationes Isidorianae*, 359, also see there note 1: MS Paris and also *MPL*, vol. 96, 1268. ʿAnbasa, see Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire*, I, 40. The geonic responsum, see *Shaʿarē sēdeq*, 24b (no. 10); cf. Lewin, *Ōsar*, *Yevāmōt*, 113 note a. See *ibid.*, the responsum ascribed in Trani (*ha-mabbīṭ*), *Resp.* I, no. 19 (fol. 5b), to ʿAmram Gaon. In the gaon's responsum *Sharīʿ* is printed, but it obviously should be: Sherini, which clearly derives from what is known from the other sources and from the graphic considerations. Indeed, so in the above mentioned *Responsa* of Trani; cf. Grätz (Hebrew), III, 428ff. (note 14). There are those who sought other interpretations of Sherini, such as Suriānī, i.e., the Syrian; or a man from Shīrīn (to the best of my knowledge Shīrīn is the name only of a river). Cf. Poznanski, *JQR*, 8 (1895/6), 699, n. 1; Mann tried to prove that Sherini in the geonic responsum should not be identified with Serenus; the latter, he argued, lived at the beginning of the eighth century and was a false messiah, nothing more, and Sherini, who lived in the second half of the ninth century, held beliefs which deviated from those of the Rabbanites. See Mann, *HUCA*, 12-13 (1937/8), 455-459, also see: Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 210ff. And see there note 104. Also see: Starr, *REJ*, 102:81, 1937; Vasiliev, *Byzantion*, 16 (1943), 476. The belief that Shemariyā = Samaria was first expressed by Nöldeke, *WZKM*, 10 (1896), 169.

eighth century), who will be discussed below in the chapter on the Karaites. After °Anan, there was ISMA'IL AL-°UKBARĪ, during the caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim (VIII 833–I 842). Most of his teaching, he says, derived from madness (or demons). Learned people who heard him mocked him. Moreover, as someone with scanty knowledge, he was full of self-admiration, because, in his books, he was constantly deprecating °Anan's importance. It is told that when he was close to death, he told his followers to inscribe on his tombstone, "the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" (2Kings 2:12; referring to Elijah's ascent to heaven). Among Isma'īl's novelties, Qirqisānī cites his annulment of the variant readings of the Bible, and instructing that the text should be read as inscribed. He believed that changes had occurred in the Biblical text, such as in Genesis 4:6, after "And Cain talked with Abel his brother", it was written: "Let us go out into the field". And so also, "Saw the thunderings" (Exodus 20:18), according to him, should be: heard. It may be that he learned this from the Samaritans. The time of the new moon, he explained, is when the crescent moon detaches from the sun, which is when the new month begins, even if it happens before the sun disappears; that is also the time for prayer and the sacrifice. He negated the sanctity of the Sabbath, such as when he allowed the consumption of fruit picked or cooked on Sabbath, such as fried eggplant. Nevertheless, he said that if someone had a gentile business partner and there were profits from Sabbath labor, a seventh of the profits should be deducted for the Sabbath, and a fiftieth for the holidays. Qirqisānī noted that some Karaites accepted this view, and it seems that he himself leaned towards them.

After Qirqisānī mentions Benjamin the Nihāwandī—who will be discussed in the chapter on the Karaites—it was the turn of ABU °IMRĀN MŪSĀ AL-ZA°AFARĀNĪ, alias AL-TIFLISĪ. He was a Baghdādī, but he moved to Tiflīs in Armenia(!) where he settled, and his followers are there "to this day" (i.e., at the beginning of the tenth century). It may be that he was a disciple of Isma'īl al-°Ukbarī, in all events, that is what the latter's followers claimed. Indeed, it is clear that regarding the order of the calendar, his views were the same as those of Isma'īl. Qirqisānī does not elaborate on this subject, and suffices with noting the fact that he accepted Isma'īl's views about the new moon; however, regarding the onset of the month, he believed that it does not begin with the moment of the new moon, but from the beginning of the day when the new moon occurs. As for meat consumption, his views were apparently more permissive, and he had 'sheets' (*awraq*; perhaps open letters sent to his followers) regarding permission for eating meat. Furthermore, it is said that he composed responsa on queries asked by Ḥayaway, i.e., Ḥīwī ha-Balkhī, these are certainly the famous questions about the contradictions in the Bible (below, sec. 194).¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Qirqisānī, 13f, 56, 59, 161, 544, 790, 852; cf. Harkavy, in Grätz (Hebrew), III, 508; on the formula on the grave Harkavy notes that this is the first time that a Jewish source in the Middle Ages mentions an inscription on a grave. About Isma'īl al-°Ukbarī also see Hadāsī, *Eshkol ha-Kofer*, 41b, no. 97, a paraphrase of Qirqisānī; see *ibid.*, in the continuation, on Mūsā al-Za°afarānī; on Mūsā al-Za°afarānī's view about the beginning of the month see also in the unclear version included in the Oxford manuscript cited by

(154) Further along, Qirqisānī mentions Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī's successor, MĪSHOI, or MĪSHAWAYH (Mūsā, also known by his *kunya*, al-Baʿlabakkī), who flourished probably in the latter half of the ninth century. According to him, he was weak in *naẓar* (philosophical casuistry, or perhaps: halachic issues), but this improved with time, according to what one said about him. His origins were in northern Persia (the area of Media, al-Jibāl), a place where superstitions and customs with no halachic basis existed secretly, and he made all of them public. He permitted the consumption of the fat of the secular slaughtering. Regarding this issue, we have another source, from the eleventh century, the Karaite, Ṭūvia b. Moses, who argues against Mīshoi that he "had intercourse with the uncircumcised", and that he "spoke in a ridiculous language together with Mathew and John and Abbā Saul (i.e., Paul) and Luke to save them.... a false prophet such as he, worshipped three deities in his old age". Qirqisānī (who notes that in his day there were still followers of Mīshoi in ʿUkbarā) also says that Mīshoi determined that the Shavuot festival must occur on a Sunday, but did not say which Sunday, and in this matter some of the people of Baṣra (of the *jamāʿa*, i.e. the Karaites) agreed with him. Passover always had to occur on a Thursday, therefore, Yom Kippur would always fall out on a Sabbath ("a sabbath of rest", Leviticus 23:32). He had doubts about the first days of the months, but he recommended observing what was already accepted (by whom, is not clear; the Karaites, apparently), because, according to him, "everyone of the coins has a defective weight (*suhūla*, apparently what he means), therefore, hold onto the dross that you have". It had been forbidden to offer a sacrifice on the sabbath, therefore, the correct formula in Numbers 28:10 is "the burnt offering for every sabbath", and not "in its sabbath", and the time for the sacrifice is therefore before the sabbath. The direction to face during prayer (the *qibla*) everywhere (he means in the eastern areas, Babylonia and Persia) should be westwards, but those who pray in Egypt or the Maghrib, should face towards Jerusalem. Qirqisānī has extreme reservations about the level of Mīshoi and his retinue, for "a learned man of common sense was never seen among them".¹⁵⁴

Poznanski, *JQR*, 10 (1897/8), 262ff. (also see there note 2 on page 265); the meaning of the version becomes clear thanks to Qirqisānī's clear text.

¹⁵⁴ Qirqisānī, 14, 57f.; Ṭūvia b. Moses, *ʿOẓar Neḥmād*, 75a-b, 101b. See Erder, *Tarbiz*, 59 (1989/90), 451f., regarding Mīshawaih's view about the "Passover thanksgiving offerings", according to the arguments against him raised by Ṭūvia b. Moses in *ʿOẓar Neḥmād*, *ibid.*; also see: Erder, *JQR*, NS 82 (1992), 280f. Perhaps it was Mīshawaih al-ʿUkbarī that Saadia meant, when he accused 'al-ʿUkbarī', who argued that "lace of blue" (Ex. ch. 28) is nothing but a *ʿalāma*, a sign (i.e., that there was no apparent importance to the color, so long as it was not white); or he may have meant Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī, see Zucker, *Tarbiz*, 41 (1971/2), 391; cf. also Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 514f. See Poznanski's article on Mīshawaih, *REJ*, 34:161, 1897; he assumes that sometimes he was called al-ʿUkbarī and sometimes al-Baʿlabakkī, because of his Baʿlabakk origins, although his main area of activity was Iraq. As for the *qibla*, Poznanski, or rather the source from which he cites (*ibid.*, 165) has a misunderstanding—i.e., that everywhere, without exception, one had to face westwards when praying. See *ibid.*, 165ff., the discussion of the two other components of Mīshawaih's argument: regarding the Passover thanksgiving offerings, which are based on the precedent of Hezekiah's Passover, where they used leavened bread and the view whereby the day begins in the morning and not in the evening, and this is also valid concerning the Sabbath; *ibid.*, 181f., Poznanski publishes the fragment of *ʿOẓar Neḥmād* of Ṭūvia b. Moses, where Mīshawaih is spoken of. See the extensive survey on Mīshawaih in

(155) In addition to the sects and their leaders that I have surveyed until now, the sources, both the Arabic and Qirqisānī (and those who copied from him) mention a number of other sects, some of which do not belong to this period, such as the *maghāriyya*, the “cave sect”, undoubtedly the Qumrān sect, and the *qarʿiyya*, the “pumpkin sect”, and other names that have been corrupted or the result of the imagination and faulty understanding of an ancient initial writer, from whom the others copied. For instance, we see that Maqdisī lists the Jewish sects; the ʿAnaniyya, the Ashmaʿathiyya, the Jālūtiyya, the Fayūmiyya, the Sāmiriyya, the ʿUkbāriyya, the Iṣbahāniyya, the ʿIrāqiyya, the Maghāriyya, the Sharastāniyya, the Filasṭīniyya, the Mālikiyya, the Rabbāniyya. Here there are the followers of ʿAnan, the Rabbanites (the Ashmaʿatis, apparently from *shemuʿā*, i.e., the Oral Law tradition), the followers of the exilarch(?), the followers of Saadia Gaon(?), the Samaritans, the followers of al-ʿUkbārī, the followers of Abū ʿĪsā al-Iṣfahānī, the Iraqis, the cave sect, the Sharastanis(?), the Palestinians (perhaps: those who follow the Palestinian yeshiva), the followers of Mālik al-Ramlī, and, again, the Rabbanites.

The followers of MĀLIK AL-RAMLĪ (perhaps from Ramla, in Palestine, but maybe Ramla in Iraq) are known in Ramla “to this day”, according to Qirqisānī, i.e., ca. 900. It is said that he stood in the Temple (? meaning, apparently, either Palestine or Jerusalem) and swore that they (also) sacrificed roosters in the Temple. About MUSHKĀ, or MUSHKĀN, Shahrasthānī tells us that he was a disciple of Yudghān, that he went to war along with 19 men, and was killed in the area of Qumm. Ibn Ṭāhir mentions the members of his sect among those who accepted Muḥammad’s prophecy (only for Arabs), along with the ʿIsawiyya. Also mentioned is a Jewish sect by the name of Shārkāniyya, or Shādhāniyya, whose members also recognize Muḥammad’s mission to the Arabs. Its leader accepted the Qurʾān, the call to prayer, the prayer and the five times of prayer, the Ramaḍān fast and the pilgrimage to the Kaʿba, and recognized all of these as precepts of the faith, but precepts set for the Arabs, not the Jews; yet many of the Shārkāniyya maintain these precepts for themselves, of their own free will.¹⁵⁵

(156) When summarizing the main principles of the beliefs of the sects according to the sources at our disposal, which are sometimes blurred and here and there contain totally unlikely details, we see that first of all, the issues that concerned most of them were those of the calendar. Above, I have mentioned the matter of the new moon—how Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbārī believed that the month began at the moment of the onset of the new moon, and the more moderate version of Abū ʿImrān Mūsā al-Zaʿafarānī, that it is

Ankori, *Kar. in Byz.*, 372-415, and Erder’s article, *Zion*, 60:37, 1995, with a close analysis of Miṣhawaih’s views.

¹⁵⁵ Maqdisī, *Badʿ*, IV, 34. Qirqisānī, 14, 57. Maqdisī, *ibid.*, 35, knows about Mālik’s adherents that they believe that only those who studied the prophets and their books will warrant resurrection. Mālik, himself, by his own word, was a student of ʿAnan’s. Mushkānites: Shahrastānī, 169, cf. Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 206ff.; *ibid.*, 207f. Friedländer raises the possibility that they were named after a location in Persia, and there are locations so called in the area of Hamadhān, and also in Fāris (southern Persia); also see there notes 92, 93. Ibn Ṭāhir, 231, 280. On the Shārkāniyya: Schreiner, *REJ*, 29 (1894), 206, and see there, 211, a fragment from Ibn Ṭāhir; also see Yefet b. ʿAlī, in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, I, 26.

enough to begin the month on the day of the sighting of the new moon. Daniel al-Qūmisī, as well, accepted their view, but changed his view in favor of the sighting method. From this we learn that among the sects were those who believed in the opposite of the sighting method, that of computation, that was held by the Rabbanites. However, the sectaries did not usually agree about the other principles in the method of the Rabbanites. As to the bases of the computation—they had a solid principle (thus al-ʿUkbarī and al-Zaʿafarānī), that the length of the month was 29 days, 12 hours and 793 parts. We have also seen the vacillations of Mīshoi al-ʿUkbarī regarding the beginning of the month. It is interesting to note that there was a faction that held that the month began with the full moon, these are the *aṣṣhāb al-badr*, the full moon people, and some ascribe this method also to the “cave sect”.

As to the sabbaths and festivals—Qirqisānī says of Yūdghān, that he totally abrogated the sabbath and festivals, arguing that they were not obligatory at this time, being only a remembrance of days gone by. Mīshoi al-ʿUkbarī, on the other hand, demanded that Passover always fall on a Thursday, so that Yom Kippur would be on Sabbath; as to Shavuot, it had to occur on Sunday. As opposed to the view about the abrogation of the sabbath, we have seen above that Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī forbade producing profits from business partnerships with gentiles, from that part of the period of partnership when sabbaths and festivals occurred. As to Mīshoi, Ṭuvia b. Moses also denounced him: “.... he permitted them.... desecrating the sanctified festivals and Sabbaths, in his paltry knowledge, that contemptible person....”. The issue of the attitude towards the sabbaths and festivals, is also mentioned by some of the Arabic writers, such as Maqdisī, who says that the people of Khurāsān disagree with the times of the festivals and other calendrical matters (“lengths of the days”), while the *maghāriyya* permit travel on the sabbath. Also, a geonic responsum, usually attributed to Naṭrūnai Gaon, contains the accusation that “they do not keep.... the sabbath”.

An issue that was apparently no less characteristic of the religious-spiritual charge of the sects, and was certainly so for the people of those generations, was the attitude towards food. Here, apparently, we find one thing and its opposite: on the one hand, severe restrictions, and, on the other, permissiveness. Above, we saw the prohibition on the consumption of meat and wine drinking of Abū ʿIsā al-Isfahānī and others. However, the gaon, in his responsum, hurls an accusation at them that “their slaughtering is not as our slaughtering, and they eat the fat and blood and eighteen forbidden foods”. In his other responsum, he accuses the followers of Sereni (Serenus; Sāwirā; see above) that “they do not check the forbidden food and do not keep their wine from being wine of the gentiles”. The statements of the Karaite, Ṭuvia b. Moses, also move in a similar direction, when he attacks the followers of Mīshoi al-Baʿlabakkī, i.e., al-ʿUkbarī, whose leader “permitted them the foods of the gentiles, the sacrifices of the dead, and the blood of pigs and dregs wine”. No less severe, was the claim about the abrogation of prayers, and, on the other hand, we have seen that Abū ʿIsā al-Isfahānī actually multiplied the prayers, seven (or ten!) a day.

Also, in the area of matrimony the approach was sometimes one thing and the opposite. There is the prohibition on divorce, and in this they were

seen as similar to the Christians. While Sereni, according to the gaon, determined that “*ketubbōt* were not to be written as decreed by the sages”, his followers are not proficient in “the laws of divorce and marriage”, and that same misleading anonymous person “permitted incest”. In the gaon’s other responsum: “They are licentious in matters of incest and marriage deeds are not drawn up, neither are deeds of divorce, and they do not practice *ḥaliṣā* (release from levirate) nor *yibbūm* (levirate marriage)”. In his two responsa there is the issue of *mamzērīm* (bastards) among the heretics; they must be investigated and excluded from the Jewish community.

The contradictory characteristics ascribed to the sectaries, may have been in real life the way described, for we are dealing with different sects, and the same holds for when they flourished. However, it appears that to some extent we are seeing the tendencies of the writers, who, by necessity, wrote in a tendentious manner to arouse the reader’s disgust for the sect whose principles they sought to describe. A more objective truth could have been expected of the Muslim writers, yet, they, too—especially those, such as ʿIsā al-Warrāq, who had a primary source available to them—drew their information from the oral statements of Jewish acquaintances, either Rabbanites or those who were themselves sectaries, certainly exaggerated and here and there totally inexact. So long as the statements were copied, they became even more corrupted, and mixed with various imaginary details, as we have seen.¹⁵⁶

(157) Here it is appropriate to examine two of the unique characteristics of the sects: the leader’s fate and the messianic idea. In a number of cases, as we have seen, the leader did not die, was not killed, but disappeared

¹⁵⁶ Daniel al-Qūmisī and the other issues regarding the new moon: Qirqisānī 57f., 790. *Aṣḥāb al-badr*, see Poznanski, *REJ*, 44 (1902), 171, n. 3, and see there the references to the Genesis commentary of Yefet b. ʿAlī and to Yeshūʿa b. Judah in his *Berēshit Rabbā*: BL Or 2461, f. 21a; MS Leiden 41, pp. 89ff.; and see *ibid.* also the references to Qirqisānī’s text about the sect of the caves. Also see Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 284, on the sect of the caves: Rosh Hashana should occur during the full moon; cf. Bammel, *ZNTW*, 49 (1958), 77. Abrogation of the Sabbath and festivals: Qirqisānī, 53, 58, 544, 876; Ṭūvia b. Moses, *Ōṣar neḥmād*, 75a; see also: Hadāsi, *Eshkol ha-k.*, 41b (no. 97); Maqdisī, *Badʿ*, 34f.; the gaon’s responsum: *Shaʿarē sedeq*, 24a (no. 7); cf. *Ōṣar ha-g.*, to *Yevāmōt*, 113 (no. 261-262); Naṭrūnai’s responsum regarding “the sects that laugh at the Jews”, etc. is ascribed in the responsa of David b. Zimrā, II, 33b, to Moses Gaon (i.e., Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, Sura, ca. 825); it is ascribed to ʿAmram Gaon in the responsa of Moses b. Joseph Trani, see *Ōṣar ha-g.* to *Yevāmōt*, 113, n. c; Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 457ff., believed that the responsum was of Naṭrūnai Gaon of Pumbedita (b. Nehemiah, AD 719; see Sherira’s *Letter*, 102; see also above, note 152), but it has already been shown that he was not correct in this issue: see Brüll, *JJGL*, 9 (1889), 119, and also Ginzberg, *Geon.* I, 50, n. 1. See the fragment published by Harkavy about the sect (of al-Maṭarī?) who began the count of the days of the week by Wednesday and sanctified Tuesday, which for them was the seventh day; also cited by Poznanski: *REJ*, 50 (1905), 18. Also see the matter of the sect which disputes *beth, daleth, waw* (i.e.: never on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday) regarding the first day of Nisan, in Poznanski, *JQR*, 10 (1898), 263 (Bodleian MS). I have already noted the matter of Wednesday among the sects (above, sec. 80) and also its connection to the Dead Sea Sect. Also cf. Cyprianus of Carthage, *De Pascha computus*, in *MPL*, 4, 1027: it is proper that Wednesday should be the first day of the calendar calculation, for it was then that the lights were created, also cf. Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 284, on the *maghāriyya*: the new year must always occur on a Wednesday, likewise, Passover. Also compare Bammel (above, in this note). On matters of marriage, see the geonic responsum (above) and the statements of Ṭūvia b. Moses (above, in this note).

astride his steed, or went into a crack in the mountain, or was swallowed up by a cave. Essentially—he would return. This idea, as is known, is among the principles of the various Shiite groups, the idea of the *raġ'a*, the return; the leader is being kept someplace with God and destined to return. Regarding both Abū ʿĪsā al-Īsfahānī, and Yūdghān after him, it was a logical continuation of the stance that they made for themselves while still alive—one of messiahs, or at least heralds of the messiah, or of prophets.

The messianic idea—meaning the idea of immediate redemption and miraculous return to Palestine—is emphasized in the sources less than the modern research tends to think, and there are those who referred to these sects in a general way, as “messianic sects”. Isidor Pacensis, as we have seen above, ascribed to Sereni the idea that his Jewish believers would at some time shortly fly to Palestine. Friedländer expressed the opinion that the idea of the miraculous flight derives from “Who are these that fly” (Isaiah 60:8). He made the effort to find parallels in the Islamic sects, especially in the Rāwandī sect. The latter were worshippers of Caliph al-Manṣūr to whom they ascribed divine qualities. Some among them threw themselves down the roof of al-Khadrā palace in Baghdad, believing they would take flight. In the end, the Baghdadis fought them, and even the caliph, himself, met them in battle. The idea of the miraculous flight won the hearts of the Jews in Iraq at other times, as we shall see, yet with the exception of Serenus, we do not find an explicit messianic moment in these sects.

We have seen what the attitude of most of the Jews, the Rabbanites, was, from the geonic responsum cited above. What was the attitude of the sectarians to the Rabbanites? It is eminently clear that they were aware of the conflict between their views and those of the Rabbanites. About Abū ʿĪsā al-Īsfahānī, Shahrastānī says that he disagreed with the Jews over many of the major (in his language: the great halachic) laws mentioned in the Bible (*fi'l-tawriya*). Qirqisānī, on the other hand, surprises us when describing Abū ʿĪsā's unusual esteem for the Rabbanites; he raised them almost to the level of prophets. From the mouth of God Himself he was told that one must pray the eighteen-blessings prayer and recite the *shema*^c in the manner of the Rabbanites. In fact, he notes, this is the way he acted in order to win the support of the simple folk; indeed, he continues, not for naught did the Rabbanites not reject the followers of Abū ʿĪsā, as opposed to their attitude towards the ʿAnanites and the Karaites. Qirqisānī relies, in this issue, on the Rabbanite Jacob b. Ephraim al-Shāmī (the Palestinian; we have no other knowledge of him), whom he asked why the Rabbanites intermarry with ʿisawiyya, who in fact ascribe prophecy to someone who is not a prophet; Jacob b. Ephraim answered: because they do not dispute us over the issue of the festivals; from here Qirqisānī notes that in the eyes of the Rabbanites the issue of the dates of the festivals is taken very strictly, even more than open heresy. On the other hand, the sectarians did not refrain from accusations and even defamation of the Rabbanites. One element of these accusations, the accusation of the *tashbīh*, anthropomorfization of God, even reached Islamic sources. Maqdisī has information that the exilarch was addicted to divine personification even more than *Ashma'ath* (the person supposed to be the founder of the *ashma'athī* denomination, i.e., the Rabbanites), and he, i.e., the exilarch,

argues that God is an old man with white hair. The exilarch also claims that in the Book of Daniel he found: "I saw the ancient of the patriarchs (certainly a derivation of 'the ancient of days' in the Book of Daniel) sitting on a throne, with a hoary beard and head and surrounded by angels". Judah of Barcelona, in the commentary of the *Sefer yeširā*, gives evidence of the "mīnīm who persecute the Jews", and implied in his statement is that they besmirch the Jewish scholars claiming that "they give a figure or picture of the Creator"; further on he claims that it is only defamation, for such a thing is impossible among the Jews. Al-Su'ūdī, writing at the beginning of the sixteenth century, actually accuses the Karaites of *tashbīh*, but he then writes that actually all the Jews believe in the *tajassum* (another name for the *tashbīh*), for they believe what is said in the Bible, that God created man in his image, and they even believe that God rests on the seventh day.¹⁵⁷

(158) Clearly, the information about the sects that I have presented above, though meager and vague, astounded the modern students and aroused their desire, first of all to understand the general background of their emergence and the influences they absorbed, whether from earlier religious bodies or from their environment. Hirschfeld believed that it is the intensive and multifaceted ideational ferment that took place in the Islamic empire during the time of the first Abbasid caliphs, that was the background for the emergence of the sects. That ideational ferment, he shows, was closely linked with progress in the different scholarly and scientific pursuits. The studies and texts in these fields, became integrated in the general Muslim theological system, a major component of which was religious law and its interpretation. The original views expressed by the Qur'ān left a significant void that was filled by theological debates, whose general name was: the *kalām*. The religious debates were significantly enriched by the translations of the Greek philosophers. The unique historical circumstances in which the Islamic world developed, gave rise to differences and contradictions, nourished by a constant and unattainable aspiration for a total blending of the religious enthusiasm of the Arab tribes, the children of the desert, and the cultural inheritance of the ancient empires the Arabs conquered. The Islamic sects arose out of these struggles and contradictions. This reality generated a parallel process among the Jews. The main factor that influenced this process, according to Friedländer's view, was the extreme Shiite sects whose activity was

¹⁵⁷ See Friedländer's extensive and detailed preamble on the *raf'a* of the Shiites, and also on their messiah, the *mahdī*, in *JQR*, NS 2 (1911/2) 481ff.; also see *ibid.*, 489 n. 33; *ibid.* 508, he generalizes and finds here a 'docetistic' influence, after the designation of the view prevalent in some of the Christian sects, which is also echoed in the Qur'ān, that Jesus' death was an illusion, "it only seemed to them". He cites a text ascribed to Maimonides in "the letter to Yemen": "Until now there are these thoughtless people who say now he will stand out of his grave". See his *Iggerōt* (Shailat), I, 111, which is a slightly different version. Also see Friedländer, *ibid.*, 503f., regarding the miraculous flight. The strange story of the *rāwandiyya*: see Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 418. See Shahrastānī, 168; Qirqisānī, 52, and see the paraphrase of his text in Hadāsī, *Eshkol ha-kofer*, 41b, no. 97. On Jacob b. Ephraim see Poznanski's article in the *D. Kaufmann Mem. Vol.* (non-Hebrew section), 169ff. See Maqdisī, *Bad'*, IV, 34; Judah of Barcelona, commentary on *Sefer ha-yeširā*, 13; Su'ūdī, 190f. Further down Su'ūdī lists places in the Bible which report reprehensible practices, such as those regarding Noah, Lot, etc., and declares that it is criminal to ascribe such sins to the prophets.

expressed, not only in preaching and winning souls, but also in ongoing repetitive rebellions. Friedländer carried out a most profound study of the historical meaning of these influences, on the basis of a detailed survey of the views of the Shiite sects and a comparison with the Jewish sects. As opposed to Harkavy, who believed there was a kernel of historical and chronological information in Qirqisānī's book, i.e., that the Abū 'Īsā movement began indeed flourishing in the days of the Umayyads, around 700, Friedländer argued in favor of Shahrastānī's chronology, that places most of the development of the Jewish sects within the framework of the anti-Umayyad struggle that led to the Abbasid revolution, i.e., in the days of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad (744-750), and the continuation in the days of the Abbasids and the stabilization of the regime under al-Manṣūr. However, the actual resemblance with the Shiite sects is in fact expressed by only one component, the blind belief in the leader, thought to be the possessor of the divine word, a prophet and messiah, at least the messenger of the messiah. This belief is translated, after his fall, to a negation of his death; he exists, guarded by God, and will return, even in a short time. According to Friedländer's view, we must see the sectarians, especially the followers of Abū 'Īsā, as if participating in the maelstrom and stormy events that took place around the period of 744-755. In the last stage of the period, al-Manṣūr had the upper hand, made order, and put a total end to the outbursts and uprisings, including that of Abū 'Īsā's followers in Iṣfahān, after the sect had held sway in this city with a large Jewish population and far removed from the Iraqi center of power. From this standpoint, if indeed Friedländer's views are correct, it would appear that the appropriate time for a framework of the possible historical kernel of the Abū 'Īsā affair, is 756/7, the time of Sunbādh the Zoroastrian's uprising in Persia, especially in the region of Rayy-Naysābūr, when a large uprising took place in northern Iraq as well. These uprisings ended with al-Manṣūr's victory, in 757. Friedländer justifiably noted that almost all of the sects were characteristic of the Persian areas, far from the center of the caliphate; the Jews of Babylonia proper were not attracted by these factions, they remained loyal to their leadership, the geonim and the exilarch. This may be added to the information regarding the low level of the Persian Jews, as seen by the people of those generations. Qirqisānī says of Mīshoi al-ʿUkkarī's followers, that "a learned man of common sense was never seen among them", and that Abū 'Īsā's followers were "ill-bred, ignoramuses, devoid of intelligence, and know-nothings". Nevertheless, it should be recalled that Serini's movement was active mainly in the area of Syria, and even in central Iraq (depending on the identification of the place names).

Yet the view opposed to the one I have just described appears to me more appropriate, since it rather emphasizes the special roots of these sects, as well as the possibility that they existed and developed long before Islam. First, we should present the view of Grätz, who believed that the source of these sects was the Jews of the Hījāz, whence Muḥammad, and ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, after him, expelled them. Like in many other issues, Grätz had the sharp sense of the historian, and here he looked for, apparently justifiably, the main factor in the internal developments of the Jews, more than in external influences. As to the matter itself, it is true that Grätz views

are not based on sufficient sources. The nature of the Ḥijāz Jews is not clear. It appears that some of them were descendants of the refugees of the uprisings in Palestine, and others were converted Arab tribes (above, secs. 5-16). Some of them moved, when expelled by Muḥammad from al-Madīna, to the area of Jericho, this is stated in Arabic sources. In the ramified research literature regarding the Judaeen Desert writings, that contains many modern (Essenes!) myths, there is room for the hypothesis (not yet voiced, to the best of my knowledge) that these writings were brought by the Jews of al-Madīna (of course, this says nothing about the time they were written, for these Jews could have possessed them for many generations before Islam). The Gnostic-Manichaeen nature of the Qumrān writings may provide evidence of the widespread acceptance of such beliefs among those Ḥijāzī Jews, and these beliefs are noticeable in the ideational load of the sects now being discussed, such as calendrical matters and more. Bīrūnī has already cited evidence about the Manichaeans, the *Ṣābiyūn*, of Iraq, that they believed themselves to be the descendants of the exiles deported by Nebuchadnezzar, i.e., they believed that their origins were Jewish. Because of the nebulous nature of the sparse sources at hand, it is difficult to arrive at solid conclusions; in all events, we do not have to accept the view that an explanation for the views of these sects can be found in the Shiite sects and the like; they undoubtedly had pre-Islamic roots that belonged to the Manichaeen world of beliefs. These beliefs survived and enjoyed a fresh flowering, as we have seen, in the eighth and the ninth centuries.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ See 188-206; Hirschfeld, *Qirgisānī St.*, 5f.; Friedländer, *JQR* NS 1 (1910/11), 183-215; the ignorance of the sectarians: Qirgisānī, 14, 283; Samawāl Ibn 'Abbās, 89 (text); see also the text of Yefet b. 'Alī in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, I, 26. See Grätz (Hebrew), III, 169f.; also see there Harkavy's note against Grätz's view, and also Friedländer's view (above in this note), 209. Some students have sought a special connection between the sectaries and the great campaigns the Arabs waged against the Byzantines in the seventh and the eighth centuries, see Starr, *Jews*, 73; Vasiliev, *Byzantium*, 16 (1943), 475; and see Mann's comments at the conference of the American Oriental Society: *JAOS*, 47 (1927), 364. The idea about which these students rallied was that these events stirred messianic ferment among the Jews, and thus generated the sects. See Nemoy, *JQR*, NS 40 (1949/50), 309, and especially note 4, who prefers Qirgisānī's version regarding the time of Abū 'Isā al-Iṣfahānī, and thus arrives at the conclusion that his revolt was suppressed at the time of al-Hajjāj Ibn Yūsuf. He also believes that the messianic content of this movement, and also of the other Jewish sects, is integrated into the ferment of Persian elements of the population and their desire to cut off from the Arabs. This unique Persian influence was, to his mind, more important than the Shiite influence. See Sharf, *Byz. Jewry*, 61-67, who believes that most of the Emperor Leo the Isaurian's edicts were actually directed against the 'messianic' sects, thus memory of them has not been preserved in the Jewish sources, and it was those edicts that, according to him, generated the great messianic ferment; Sharf connects this ferment with the Montanists whom this emperor also persecuted; however, Jewish history under Byzantine rule is peppered with persecution and forced baptism, echoes of which have been preserved actually in non-Jewish sources, and nothing about the sects can be learned from this; as we have seen, most of their activity and struggles were in the area of the Muslim world and not actually in Byzantium. De Labriolle's book, *La crise montaniste*, that he mentions there, adds nothing to his argument; there is doubtful information, on p. 94, according to which the Phrygian Montanists believed that the (Heavenly) Jerusalem would actually advent from the Heavens where they were, something which has no connection with our discussion. Morony, *Iraq*, 328, sees a link between Abū 'Isā and the fratricid wars in Islam, 685-692, and also between him and the rebellion of Mukhtār; he explains it by an alleged special connection of Mukhtār with Iṣfahān, Abū 'Isā's base, according to Dīnawarī;

(159) Some of the sects' principles and some details in their history indicate a Christian connection. Even the information that I have presented (above, sec. 148), about Abū 'Īsā's Nisibis derivation, may provide a clue in this direction, for Nisibis was a Christian spiritual and learning center, with a status parallel to that of the Jews' Sura and Pumbedita. The sources indicate that Serini (i.e., Serenus or Severus) was a Christian. Recognition of Jesus' prophecy, too, must arouse attention, even more than the recognition of the prophecy of Muḥammad. The recognition of Muḥammad was expected in a sect that flourished under Muslim rule and in close proximity to the seceding Muslim sects. The recognition of the prophecy of Jesus has another possible hypothetical support, that this sect contained a core of Christians that joined it, and sought to win adherents for its views among the Christians. It should be borne in mind that Jesus had a place of honor also in Manichaean theology. The interdiction of divorce as well as the demand that Shavuot always fall on a Sunday also point in a Christian direction. Especially indicative of such a direction are the statements of Ṭūvia b. Moses, who certainly knew some things that are not contained in the other sources available to us today; we have seen his complaints about Mīshoi al-ʿUkbarī (i.e., al Baʿlabakkī): "he had intercourse with the uncircumcised", he permitted the "blood of pigs", he accepted the views of "Matthew, John, and Abbā Saul and Luke", "he worshipped three deities in his old age". Proof for these is also provided from another direction. In October 818, the Yaʿqubite church's synod was held. The decisions of that assembly, headed by Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē, the patriarch, have been preserved: "the decisions of Holy Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē the patriarch of Antioch of Syria, and of the synod which was gathered with him". Along with the severe external distress, spoken of therein, the problems of the appointment of bishops and the struggle against internal intrigues in the church and against the competing patriarch, Abiram, the adoption of measures against the penetration of Jewish influences is also described. It is said therein, that Christians, even if properly baptized, joined the synagogues and even circumcised their sons.

The sources sometimes trace the condition of the sects at the time they were written. Qirqisānī notes that in his time (beginning of the tenth century) there was still a community (*jamāʿa*) in Damascus of Abū 'Īsā's followers, known as 'Īsūniyya, composed of 20 families. Yet elsewhere in his book, he tells of only 20 souls, and in another place: 20 or 30, and that some may have remained in Iṣfahān. A small number of Yūdghān's adherents remained in Iṣfahān. There were no longer followers of Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī, he writes. Yet at the same time he notes that "there are very few ʿAnanites and their number is dwindling". On the other hand, he notes the significant growth in the Karaite community (*aṣḥābunā*, our people). Thus it is clear, like in most of the sources in his book, that Qirqisānī is speaking of the sects of Abū 'Īsā, and the like, as well as the Karaites in the same breath; implied in all of this is that by and large the sects were absorbed into the Karaites, and one may assume that it is these sectarians who composed most of the Karaite population in the middle of the ninth

see Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 288ff. (on Mukhtār); indeed Iṣfahān is also mentioned there, but this has nothing relevant and nothing from here can be garnered regarding Abū 'Īsā.

century, the time of Benjamin al Nihāwandī; with this I shall be dealing below, in the discussion of the Karaites. Mann pointed to external circumstances, political ones, that at one time led to the flourishing of the sects, and at another, made it difficult for them: the decision by al-Ma'mūn about freedom of association, in the 820s (above, sec. 80) made it easier for the sects to operate freely, while in the reactionary period of al-Mutawakkil (847-861), the various *minīm* suffered duress. This explains the responsum of the gaon (apparently Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, mid-ninth century) about the *minīm* who sought to recant (perhaps because of fear of the regime), and how to deal with them. It appears that at that time there was also a process of unification among the sectarians. At the center of that process were, apparently, Mīshoi al-ʿUkbarī, on the one hand, and Benjamin al-Nihāwandī, on the other; then ʿAnan's great grandson, ʿAnan b. Daniel, worked with them, and it was he who ran the policy vis-à-vis the regime and obtained its recognition after a period of persecutions and imprisonment, a recollection of which is preserved in the story of ʿAnan's imprisonment that I shall discuss in the chapter on the Karaites, and which is to be ascribed to ʿAnan b. Daniel. An ancient Karaite tradition, that recognizes the leaders of the sects as part and parcel of Karaism, is preserved in the statements of Joseph b. Moses Baḡi in *Iggeret qiryā ne'emānā*, the manuscript Mann published (the time of the *Iggeret*: the mid-sixteenth century). According to him, the Karaites mourn, among others, "... Abū Nissī and Obadiah the *maskīl*"; Mann was right in showing that Obadiah was none other than Abū ʿĪsā al-Īṣḥānī. Qirqisānī mentions "people among the Karaites" who still maintain the ideas of Yūdhān regarding the Sabbath and festivals; Abū ʿImrān Mūsā al-Tiflīsī and Mālik al-Ramlī did not leave books of precepts, thus implying that their followers had close to nothing to guide them, especially since they "disagreed with the Karaites (*al-jamāʿa*) only in few matters; (their opposition to) Shavuot falling on a Sunday, and the prohibition of the consumption of the tail and the ligament and marrying the brother's daughter, and the like". And when mentioning the views of Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī and Mūsā al-Zaʿafarānī about the new moon, he adds that Daniel al-Qūmisī agreed with them before he changed his mind in favor of the sighting method, as did the Karaite community of Baṣra, namely the earliest among them (it should be assumed—those who joined the Karaites in the mid-ninth century). Qirqisānī, himself, accepted (as is implied) the views of Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī regarding someone with a gentile business partner on keeping the Sabbath. He lists all those who belong, so he says, to the Karaites: ʿAnan, Benjamin, Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī, al-Tiflīsī, al-Ramlī, Daniel al-Qūmisī, and all the innovators (*al-muḥaddithīn*) "who do not accept the word of one person"; (i.e., those who do not belong to any of the Karaite parties); all of them agree that the ʿomer is winnowed on a Sunday; and thus so is Shavuot. Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī forbade the consumption of cattle meat in the exile (*fi'l-jāliya*; he does not mean outside of Palestine, but: after the destruction of the Temple), and so did ʿAnan, Benjamin, and Daniel al-Qūmisī. This batch of examples clearly shows that the adherents of the sects (most, if not all of them) were indeed coopted into the ranks of Karaism. At the beginning of the tenth century, the time *al-anwār wa'l-marāqib* was written, there were still differences among the Karaites, thus it

should come as no surprise that the Karaite Qirqisānī attacked the people of the sects and the factions in Karaism and mocked them.¹⁵⁹

2. *Karaites*

(160) Elsewhere, I have surveyed the sources pertaining to the beginning of Karaism. Early Rabbanite sources hardly mention ʿAnan b. David, considered the founder of Karaism, except for Naṭrūnai Gaon b. Hillai (Sura, approximately 853-861) whose statements are mentioned in *Seder ʿAmram Gaon*, and Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, mentioning the schism of ʿAnan that took place at the time of Yehudai Gaon b. Naḥmān (757-761): then “ʿAnan left”. Naṭrūnai Gaon’s statements are made against the *mīnīm* who refuse to recite the accepted texts of the Passover *seḏer* (“at the beginning our forefathers were idol worshippers”, etc.); they “mock and belittle the words of the sages”, they are “the students of ʿAnan, may his name rot, the forefather of Daniel”, whose main sin was that he “composed a *talmūd* of evil and abuse, all by himself, and composed a book of precepts, that was seen by ʿEleazar *alūf* (b. Samuel) of Aspāmiya”, which is a ‘book of abominations’, ‘with a number of tricks’, etc. According to Abraham Ibn Daʿūd in *The Book of Tradition*, ʿAnan was of the exilarchic dynasty and broke away because he was refused the position of exilarch. Among the Karaites themselves, Qirqisānī confirms that ʿAnan was indeed a contemporary of Caliph al-Manṣūr (754-775); the “Controversy (*ḥillūq*) of the Rabbanites and the Karaites” says that he was rejected in favor of his younger brother, Ḥananiah; ʿAnan was then incarcerated because of his schismatic ideas, but heeding the advice of a Muslim fellow prisoner (according to one tradition this was none other than Abū Ḥanīfa, the famous Muslim jurist) he contended that he belonged to a different faith—something permitted by Muslim law—moreover, that the members of his religion fixed the beginning of the month by the sighting of the new moon, as the Muslims do, and thus his life was spared. Early Muslim sources, drawing information mainly from Karaite sources, beginning with Qirqisānī, and Karaite informants they were acquainted with, distinguish between ʿAnan and the Karaites. These sources know that ʿAnan was a member of the exilarchic dynasty, and even served as exilarch. As to the views of the Karaites, they know about the exclusivity of the Bible and the denial of the Oral Law; fixing the onset of the month by the sighting method, and sticking to the ancient custom to decide on the leap year according to the state of the early wheat (the *avīv*); their special laws

¹⁵⁹ See Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 206, 318. He explains therein that the real *ṣābiʿūn* were descendants of Jews exiled to Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar, and are concentrated mainly in Southern Iraq. They faced northwards in prayer. Perhaps in his demand that the person praying face Jerusalem (above, sec. 154), Mīshawaih al-ʿUqbārī actually wanted to bring about a change in this sect. See the decisions of the Church in 808: Vööbus, *Oriens Christianus*, 48 (1964), 299. The *ʿisūniyya* in Damascus: Qirqisānī, 12, 59 (also there the matter of the ʿAnanites); 283 (also there on Yūdghān’s followers). See on the connection between the plight of the *mīnīm* and al-Mutawakkil’s decrees: Mann *HUCA*, 12-13 (1937/8), 457; *iggeret qiryā neʿemānā*: Mann, *Texts*, II, 303 n. 6; Yūdghān’s ideas: Qirqisānī, 53. Abū ʿImrān and Mālik: *ibid.*, 57; also see there: 544, 790, 852, 1241. Nemoy, *JQR*, NS 40 (1949/50), 310 also expressed the view that the real source of Karaism was in the sects.

regarding comestibles and slaughter; and, in more essential matters: the negation of the *tashbīh*, the anthropomorphization of God, the positive attitude towards Jesus (though they did not believe him to be a prophet) and the recognition of Muḥammad as the prophet of the Arabs. Today we have the Judean Desert Sect scrolls that help further a better understanding of Karaism, and know of the close resemblance between the views of the early Karaites and those of the sect, especially thanks to the work of Naphtali Wieder. There are also the documents of the Cairo Geniza, where Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ, the sons of Josiah, the grandson of °Anan and the brother of Daniel, those referred to pejoratively by Naṭrūnai, are mentioned (above). Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ were the heads of the Palestinian yeshiva, “until the sons of Šemaḥ were deposed”—this happened only towards the end of the ninth century. If we add what al-Bīrūnī tells us, that the °Anan ‘the exilarch’ to whom the °Ananites refer, was the son of Daniel b. Saul b. °Anan b. David, i.e., ‘the second’ °Anan, who flourished at the end of the ninth century, we may conclude that the final schism of the house of °Anan took place only in the ninth century. It is also possible to add the discharge from prison because he was a believer in “a separate religion”, as ascribed to °Anan the Karaite by the tradition that I mentioned above; it was a release from prison that is appropriate for the time of al-Ma’mūn (809-833), as we have seen in regard to the controversy between David and Daniel (i.e., Daniel b. °Anan, ‘the second’ °Anan’s father), for al-Ma’mūn permitted dissension among the protected people (above, sec. 80); it is probable that this is in regard to °Anan ‘the second’, as I have shown (above, sec. 159); this, of course, invalidates the tradition that the Muslim who met °Anan in jail was Abū Ḥanīfa. Moreover, we have the letter of Hayy b. David (as I have assumed), noting, at about 850, that many scholars at the Sura yeshiva were followers of the house of °Anan (above, sec. 100). In light of all this evidence, it appears that without hesitation one may conclude that there is no basis for attributing the schism of the house of °Anan—a branch of the exilarchic dynasty, to join the Karaites—to °Anan b. David, i.e., the ‘first’ °Anan, who lived in the eighth century; rather to Daniel his grandson and to Daniel’s son, who was ‘the second’ °Anan.¹⁶⁰

(161) Harkavy, who edited the remains of °Anan’s book of precepts, endeavoured to include, aside from those parts of the book found in the Cairo Geniza, also citations from it, that he found in the Karaite writers: Isaiah b. Judah, Yāshār b. Ḥesed al-Tustarī, Solomon the *nāsī* (b. Hezekiah?) and others. Therein are (1) the laws of forbidden foods; (2) the

¹⁶⁰ Before the English version of this book was prepared, my article on the origins of the Karaites (Hebrew) was published; see: Gil, *Te’ūdā*, 15:71, 1999; see Sherira, *Letter*, 107; *Seder ‘amram ga’ōn* (Frumkin), II, 206f. The influence of the Judean Desert sectaries on the views of the Karaites was extensively described by Wieder, in his book, *Judean Scrolls*, etc. Also see Erder’s article, *Cathedra*, 42 (1987), 54-68, where he dealt with the influence of ancient sects on the Karaites, and the possibility that ideas similar to those of the Judean Desert Sect were absorbed in the Babylonian environment. See the discussion in Gil, *History*, 777-784, with the additional citations on which the above remarks are based; see in the continuation there, 790-794, the genealogy of the Karaite *nesi’im*, and *ibid.*, 657-659, on the (putative) status of Josiah, °Anan’s grandson, and the (proven) status of his sons Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ in the Palestinian yeshiva; in fact, there is no proof that the father, Josiah b. Saul b. °Anan b. David, also served as Palestinian gaon; this is just an assumption.

laws of *kil'ayim* (mingled seed, or garments, or animals; Lev. 19:19) and *sha'atnez* (garment of linen and wool); (3) the laws of refraining from gentiles and wicked people; (4) the laws of the ritual fringes; (5) the laws of the sabbatical year; (6) the laws of honoring the Torah and the precepts; (7) the laws pertaining to people deserving capital punishment; (8) the laws regarding blemishes; (9) the laws pertaining to harming a pregnant woman; (10) the laws of judges; (11) the laws regarding the reciting of the Torah; (12) the laws of blessing the Torah, grace after meals, and blessings over the commandments; (13) the laws regarding entering the tabernacle of the congregation and the synagogue; (14) the laws of Torah study; (15) the laws regarding bodily purity; (16) the laws regarding the four who have to confess; (17) the laws about reading the pericope; (18) the laws of impurity and purity; (19) the laws of the Sabbath and festivals; (20) the laws of circumcision; (21) the laws regarding women and forbidden marriages.

Qirqisānī provides an early survey of °Anan's beliefs. (1) He permitted bearing light things on the Sabbath, some say that he meant carrying things (only) within the home. (2) He permitted prayer only in a fenced off area, a *ḥaṣṣēr* (meaning: a house). (3) He only permitted the baking of *maṣṣōt* out of barley, and if they were made with wheat it is as if one ate leavened food. (4) Circumcision must be done with a scissors, and two pads made of linen must be used, one large and the other small, and with nut oil, and if it was not so done the child was considered uncircumcised. (5) Grown up men (i.e., converts) were to be circumcised on the 11th day of the month, while women are converted on the 8th day of the month. (6) Early wheat (*aviv*) should be checked in the month of Shevat, and, if necessary, Shevat, not Adar, is the intercalated month. (7) "... a wife to her sister" (Leviticus 18:18) should be interpreted: a woman and her sister's daughter. (8) "And if he that hath the issue spit upon him" (Leviticus 15:8) he interpreted as excluding women, because they are not defiled by it. (9) He required a fast of 70 days, from 13 Nisan to 23 Siwan, and every 7th day of the month, also on the two days when the Scroll of Esther is recited. (10) He forbade sexual intercourse during daylight hours, or performing more than one coital act in one day, or with a woman who is three or more months pregnant. (11) The Sabbath causes Passover to be deferred to 17 Nisan, as also Sukkot. (12) He abrogated defilement passing through water or from vessel to vessel, or the defilement of the dead, or that of a man who has passed semen, and other kinds of impurity. In addition to all these, it was said of him that he believed in reincarnation and even wrote a book on the subject. Qirqisānī testifies that he met some of his followers and that they indeed held this belief. According to Qirqisānī there were very few °Ananites, and their number was dwindling.

If indeed the °Ananites were followers of °Anan, then we must assume that their leader was °Anan b. Daniel, not °Anan b. David; and why did their number dwindle only one or two generations after their leader's death? For this was already after the beginning of the merger between this branch of the exilarchic dynasty and the sects, that began being called in this period, i.e., from the mid-ninth century, Karaites.

Qirqisānī, when relating the main details about °Anan—the exilarch who flourished at the time of al-Manṣūr—says of him that he was the first person who explained all the laws pertaining to the precepts, that he was

well-versed in rabbinical matters, and none of the Rabbanites found anything in his statements on which to express reservations. Hayy (b. Nahshōn, below, sec. 203), who, together with his father Nahshōn translated ʿAnan's book from Aramaic to Hebrew, recognized that everything ʿAnan said was taken from the teachings of the Rabbanites, except for the matter of the firstborn, and the matter of the distinction between what was seeded by Jews and what was seeded by gentiles, and they did not know where he got the material from, until they found it in the *piyyūṣim* (the *hizāna*) of Yannai. Nevertheless, someone delving into ʿAnan's book of precepts will find many matters that are different from the accepted *halākhā*, and Harkavy has already written that Naṭrūnai Gaon's statements "that he said to all the errants and those who lust after him: leave the words of the *mishnā* and *talmūd* and I will make a *talmūd* of my own for you", are verified.

Was it ʿAnan b. David who wrote the book of precepts, or was it his great grandson ʿAnan b. Daniel? It may be that the statements of Pirqoy b. Bāboy are directed at ʿAnan b. David, apparently his contemporary, relying on Yehudai Gaon and extolling the Oral Law as transmitted from generation to generation in the Babylonian yeshivot, and negating the Palestinian customs that are "the customs of apostasy". According to Pirqoy, the *talmūd* of the Palestinians is incomplete, they even claim that custom supercedes *halākhā*, and he mentions the *apīqorsin* (the godless) that rely on the Palestinian customs. We see how the fierce controversy that sundered the exilarchic dynasty was generated. There was a branch of this dynasty, that of ʿAnan b. David, that kept the customs that were (or that he had invented that so they were) honored in Palestine, and this branch had, on the one hand, a foothold in Sura, and in Palestine, itself, on the other hand; for we indeed find, about one hundred years later, the sons of Josiah, ʿAnan's grandson, i.e., Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ, who were the great grandsons of ʿAnan b. David, as was the 'second' ʿAnan, at the head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* in Palestine. Josiah's brother, Daniel, was even exilarch for a while, apparently in the twenties of the ninth century, until he was deposed and replaced by David b. Judah, who undoubtedly represented the Babylonian position as it was formulated especially in Pumbedita. This fateful controversy, therefore, went on for a number of generations, and we see indications of it even in the second half of the ninth century, and even in the Pumbedita yeshiva (above, sec. 100).

The two brothers, Josiah and Daniel, divided, as it were, the Diaspora among them: Josiah and his sons Jehoshaphat and Šemaḥ moved to Palestine; Daniel and his son ʿAnan ('the second') flourished in Babylonia and Persia. Naṭrūnai b. Hillai did not, as it seems from his statements, know ʿAnan's book of precepts, until a Spaniard, Eleazar *alūf* b. Samuel told him about it; according to Poznanski, it appears that ʿAnan's ideas gained adherents especially among the Jews of Persia, less so in Babylonia, perhaps the reason why his book was not known by the Babylonian gaon. Indeed, the two prominent figures in the development of the Karaite view and building the bridge between the sects and the faction of ʿAnan and his descendants, were the Persians, Benjamin al-Nihāwandī and Daniel al-Qūmisī. Until now we have seen one root of Karaism, the faction of ʿAnan and his descendants and adherents, bearers of the 'non-Babylonian' ideas

and embroiled in controversy with their ideational rivals in the Babylonian yeshivot also around the very earthy subject of the exilarchy.¹⁶¹

(162) As stated, it appears that the man who succeeded in concentrating the remnants of the sects, about the middle of the ninth century, and build the bridge between them and 'Anan's party, was Benjamin al-Nihāwandī. Qirqisānī, writing about two generations after the time of Benjamin, knew that he was a contemporary of Isma'īl al-'Ukbarī. He was a learned man, well-versed in Bible and rabbinical lore; it was said of him that he served as *dayyān* for many years. He adopted a middle ground between the writings and the *qiyās* (analogy), in other words: he endeavoured to remain faithful also to the plain sense of the text. Qirqisānī lists Benjamin's views: (1) God created an angel and it is he who dealt with all aspects of the creation, he dispatches the messengers, brings about the miracles, and produces everything that is new in the world. (2) As to *yibbūm*: a married woman is not required to accept *yibbūm*, only a betrothed woman is. (3) "... and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated" (Deuteronomy 21:15), he interpreted that the son of the hated wife will always be considered to be the firstborn, even if he is younger than the son of the other wife. (4) "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him" (Exodus 22:1), even in a dugout that was already there, even in a ruined building. (5) "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped" (Deuteronomy 23:16), even if his master is a Jew. (6) He

¹⁶¹ See Harkavy's book, *Ha-sārīd we-ha-pāṭīṭ* (*Zikkārōn la-rish*. VIII); another fragment of 'Anan's Book of Precepts, dealing with the laws of forbidden sexual relations, was published by Sokolov, *Izvestiya* (1928), 246-249. Other fragments of the Book of Precepts were published by Poznanski, *REJ*, 45 (1902), 54-68 (from fragments of a commentary on the Book of Precepts written in Judeo-Arabic by Yeshu'ā b. Judah, according to an assumption of Poznanski, *ibid.*). See Schechter, *Documents*, II; and J.N. Epstein, *Tarbiz*, 7 (1935/6), 283ff. See Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 53f., 59. Also see in Poznanski, *ibid.*, 181f., a fragment of the Book of Precepts copied by Moses Bashiyaṣī, and further down more information about the Book of Precepts and also on the other book of 'Anan, which did not survive, the *fadhlaḳa* (summing up), which appears to have been a kind of compendium of the Book of Precepts, inclusive of the rest of his views. On the similarity between the Book of Precepts and the Rabbanite views: Qirqisānī, *ibid.*, 13. Harkavy, in Grätz (Hebrew), III, 504f.; Poznanski saw the issue somewhat differently, *ibid.*, 44 (1902), 181, writing that in general, 'Anan was not so different from the Talmud; he did tend towards milder views, such as in regards to meat and milk; however, on the other hand, he is considerably more severe, such as in his Sabbath proscriptions, prohibitions on eating meat and the demand of mourning over Zion. See Pirqoy b. Bāboy's summary in Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/31), 392f. On the distribution of 'Anan's ideas in the Persian areas see: Poznanski, *Yerushalayim* (of Luncz), 10 (1914), 89. See 'Anan's laws of circumcision, in Harkavy (above, this note) 77ff., and *ibid.*, 79-81, particularly regarding proselytes, certainly an important issue at that time, as seen in what Qirqisānī listed (above). An exceptional idea of 'Anan's is the demand for tithing metals, because they derive from the earth (gold, silver, iron, copper), see Harkavy, *ibid.*, and the commentary of Samuel b. Hophni to Deut. 14:22 (Greenbaum edition, 519). See Eliya b. Abraham's *Hillūq ha-qārā'im we-ha-rabbānīm*, in Pinsker, *Liqquē qadm.*, 103; Nemoy, *Lōw Mem. Vol.*, 239ff., with his many reservations regarding the trustworthiness of the sources on 'Anan, and Baron's response: *SRHJ*, V, 388; it appears that Nemoy was the one who was correct. See also Poznanski, *Hastings Enc.*, VII, 662, n. 3, showing the Arabic sources' dependence on the Karaite sources, as evinced by the *kunya*, *ra's al-jālūt*, the exilarch, with which they referred to him. Cf. the discussion on the Book of Precepts in Ben-Shammai, *Religionsgespr.*, 15f.; also see the above: *Stud. in Musl. Jew. Relat.*, 19ff., on 'Anan and the 'Ananites. Regarding the laws of prayer, Torah recitation, festivals, fast days, etc., according to 'Anan, see Mann's article: *JJLP*, 1:329, 1919; Isma'īl influences: *idem*, *JQR*, NS 12 (1921/2), 136.

forbade the marriage between a man and a woman who in their infancy had shared the same nursemaid. (7) A child is required to abide by the precepts when he starts to talk. (8) The onset of the months of Tishri and Nisan will be set according to the sighting method, the others may be set by calculation. (9) As to fowl, he permitted their consumption regardless of whether they were slaughtered or had their necks wrung. (10) He negated capital punishment for "a betrothed damsel" who slept with a man "in the field" (Deut. 22:25), even with her consent. (11) He negated the impurity of the aborted fetus; only a person who dies in the lighted space causes impurity. (12) Only a grave outside the house causes impurity, not if it is within the house. (13) If a man has sexual intercourse with a woman during her menstrual cycle, her clothes cause impurity and he should wash his clothes and his body. (14) A person cannot become impure during the twilight hour.

Clearly, Qirqisānī presented Benjamin's ideas in a shallow and simplistic manner, and dealt overmuch with unimportant (and at times bizarre) matters. An echo of such we find in the Arabic writer al-Su'ūdī, when writing about a Jewish sect known as *al-binyaminiyya*, the followers of Benjamin, who believed in the unity of God, yet they believed that He had a rival among his creatures who worked against Him, and that evil derives from him, not from God. Benjamin has clearly brought remnants of a dualistic tradition whose roots cannot be defined with certainty. Mann believed that there were Isma'īlī influences, indeed the Isma'īlīs absorbed dualistic ideas, even the idea of the indirect creation. The idea of the Karaite link with the Zadokites, the dualists par excellence according to some Arabic sources, contributed to the opinion that the Karaites were originally dualists. The Zadokites were referred to as *zindiqs* (*zanādiqa*; which usually means Manichaeans, but also dualists, in a general sense). Modern students, before learning of the Judaeen Desert writings, indeed ascribed to the Karaites (starting with Benjamin) a connection with the ancient Zadokites; according to Geiger, Zadokite ideas continued to flourish, first among the Samaritans, later—among the Karaites; similar opinions were expressed by Harkavy and by Poznanski. Yet there is no real basis for assuming such a connection, either directly or indirectly, between the ancient Zadokites and the Karaites.

Benjamin al-Nihāwandī was apparently the first person who used the term *benē miqrā* (people of the Bible), which to him was a name that included all the people of the sects, and it is clear that, according to the conception of these first Karaites, and unlike the beliefs that derive from modern research (such as, that the term Karaites was influenced by the Arabic *dā'ir*), the term Karaites does indeed derive from the Bible (*miqrā*). It appears that Benjamin was the person who achieved the connection with the house of 'Anan and his faction; perhaps by virtue of his being a disciple of Josiah b. Saul b. 'Anan—a fact that has been preserved in *Dōd Mordekhai* and in *Orah šadiqim*. It should be noted that the preoccupation of Benjamin with proselytes was a salient issue, as Qirqisānī shows (above), and so was that of 'Anan, in his book of precepts, which, among other matters, dealt with the laws of the circumcision of proselytes and the laws of conversion, in general. We shall add Qirqisānī's statements regarding the Karaites in Khurāsān and Jibāl (the region of Media), who

claimed that the messiah had already arrived; the Arabic writer Abū'l-Fidā' also knows about the °Ananites, that they accepted the views of the messiah (i.e., of Jesus) and claimed that they were not in contradiction to the Torah, but they did not admit that Jesus was a prophet, but one of the righteous; and believed that the New Testament is not the fruit of divine revelation, only the story of Jesus' life, as gathered by four of his disciples. These statements regarding proselytes and the attitude towards Jesus, strengthen the impression that it is Christians, or Manichaeans, who constituted an important component of the sects prior to Karaism, as I have already written (above, sec. 159). Therefore, this is still felt in the new structure that stemmed from the blending of the sects with the group of the °Ananites, a blending whose initiators and leaders were Benjamin al-Nihāwandī and 'the second' °Anan, both belonging to the ninth century.

Now I will return to the issue that was, as stated, central for the sects, and was so in Karaism from the start—the matter of the calendar. As is clear from some of the sources, here there were different ideas among the Karaites, which the different components of the new movement brought from the previous sects. Levi ha-Levi b. Yefet relates in his book of precepts (after listing the Rabbanites' calendar principles) what the Karaites' system was in the land of Shinar, i.e., Babylonia. They "would make the new year only on the *i'tidāl*" (*i'tidāl*, the equality, i.e., between the day and the night, which necessitated the use of the solar calendar). Others "made it on the *aviv* alone, and did not require the *i'tidāl* and discarded it completely"). It continues: Karaites, "in the land of Shinar and other places far from Palestine, patterned themselves on the Rabbanites since they found that their intercalations were mostly sound ones". A major principle tailored by the Karaites was the determination of the new month by the moon sighting method, as their writers, of the tenth and the eleventh centuries, emphasized at every opportunity. Another major principle was that the day of the winnowing of the °omer and what took place seven weeks later, i.e., Shavuot, would fall on a Sunday. This is what Qirqisānī wrote, noting that all those who were considered Karaites agreed with it and he lists them: °Anan, Benjamin, Isma'īl al-°Ukbarī, al-Tiflīsī, al-Ramlī, Daniel al-Qūmisī, i.e., the sects, whose blending together gave rise to Karaism; thus also (as I have already written above) all the innovators, (*al-muḥaddithūn*) "who do not rely on the words of one specific person".¹⁶²

¹⁶² On Benjamin, see: Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 13, 55f. See al-Su'ūdī, in Schreiner, *REJ*, 29 (1894), 207. The Zadokites were dualists: Maḥbūb of Manbij: *CSCO*, ser. 3, t. 5., 128; Maqrīzī, *Khitaṭ*, III, 374; cf. Erder, *JNES*, 49 (1990), 349 n. 83. Regarding the Angel of Creation, see Wolfson, *JQR*, NS 51:89, 1960. Ibn Kammūna in Hirschfeld, *Ar. Chrest.* 95, was apparently accepting the Karaites' denials, for to be a *zindīq* was a dangerous matter in the Muslim world; he denies any connection between the Karaites and the Zadokites, those who "became dualists and denied (the existence) of the afterlife, and also in the Christians' New Testament there is mention of their denial of the resurrection and angels and spirits"; true, he writes, here and there, their ideas coincide with those of the Zadokites. See Geiger, *JZWL*, 2 (1863), 12; Harkavy, *JJGL*, 2 (1899), 112, 117; Poznanski, *Hastings Enc.*, VII, 662. Nevertheless, the references to Šādōq and Baythos are deeply ingrained in the Karaites' self-consciousness, let it suffice to consider the author of the *ḥillūq*, written in the twelfth century; he has information that in his day there were only four sects among the Jews: Rabbanites, Karaites, Tiflisians, and adherents of Mīshawaih, and of them, the Karaites have the most ancient roots, from Šādōq and Baythos; see in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 99ff., and cf. Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 490ff. The first person to use the term *benē miqrā*, "people of the

(163) The history of Karaism in the first centuries of Islamic rule is paved with struggles against the Rabbanites, who always constituted the great majority of the Jews, and who had an agelong and strong community organization. By their very essence, the Karaites were an adherent-seeking organization constantly on the lookout to increase its numbers through incessant propaganda among the Rabbanites. It will suffice us if we delve, for example, into the writings of Daniel al-Qūmisī, in some of his biblical commentaries. "The people of the *Gālūt* (Diaspora) say that we should rather follow the Rabbanites, their festivals by calculation, light the fire on the night of the Sabbath, eat meat and fat, drink wine and be happy, than follow the Bible, for whoever leaves the path of the Rabbanites will be devoid of bread, impoverished, and childless" (the gist of the arguments pertain to the calendar differences, keeping the Sabbath, comestibles, and the laws of mourning). "Those who slept with the daughter of a brother and the daughter of a sister and the wife of a brother and the other matters of forbidden marriages and the Sabbath candle and all the alleviators of the matter of the impurity of the dead.... And killing 'it and her young' (Lev. 22:28) and meat and wine" (then follow the marriage restrictions). "They have put upon themselves kinds and kinds of books such as Bartalyā(?), Qinnasrīn(?), and the book of Balaam(?)..... The book of Adam(?), the *sefer ha-yāshār* the *sefer ha-rīzīm* (! instead of *ha-rāzīm*, the mysteries) the *rāzā rabbā*.... in addition to the *sefer nujūm* (zodiacs) that they copied". "The altars in the *Gālūt* (exile, i.e., in the absence of the Temple) *gurnā* (= *jurn* [Arabic], trough, kneading trough), the butchers, eating meat when there is no sacrifice.... Especially since they do not keep the Sabbath today as it should be by law, neither do they keep the true festivals and they are eaters of meat and drinkers of wine, do not maintain the laws of the impurity of the dead nor the impurity of the gentiles, and their prayers are impure". "They abolish vows and oaths, especially on the nights of *kippūrīm*". One may, of course, add to this more examples, of his, and also of others of his time.

It would appear that the beginning of the polemic with views such as these, apparently from the pre-Karaite period, is reflected in the writings of Pirqoy b. Bāboy that are taken from the teachings of his master, Yehudai Gaon b. Naḥmān. He parries with the overly severe Sabbath restrictions: the preservation of life and circumcision take preference over the Sabbath;

Scripture": Harkavy, *JE*, VII, 438. See Erder, *JOS*, 14:195, 1994, who relates the term Karaites to *qerīyē ha-shem*, "the people called by God" in the "Covenant of Damascus"; however, it seems to me that at least at the outset, the term meant: people of the *miqrā*, the Scripture, and among Aramaic speakers: the people of *qerā*, which is *miqrā*, Bible, in Aramaic. The books of Benjamin: the Book of Laws (*mas'at benyāmīn*), was published in Eupatoria in 1836; the Book of Precepts, of which fragments have survived that were published by Harkavy, *Ha-sārīd*, 175ff. Josiah, Benjamin's teacher: Mordekhai b. Nisan (1966), 60, 96 (*Ōrah šaddīqīm*); Poznanski, *Hastings Enc.*, VII, 664; *idem*, *Ōsar isrā'ēl*, III, 127; true, the source is relatively late, yet one does not concoct such things and it is undoubtedly true. Circumcision of proselytes: Harkavy, *Ha-sārīd*, 79f.; the Messiah had already arrived: Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 62. See Abū'l-Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, I, 88. Levi b. Yefet: in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 89; there he mentions the year 397 "of the little horn", i.e., AH, which began on 10 November 1002, which is approximately the time when it was written; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 12 (1921/2), 270. Qirqisānī on the winnowing of the 'omer and *shāwū'ōt*: *Anwār*, 852. See the brief discussion of the Karaite calendar: Lewin, in *Sefer rav se'adyā*, 493.

the preservation of life even takes preference over circumcision, etc. He strongly opposes those who negate the Oral Law. Vigorous explicit literary activity against the Karaites is first found in Saadia Gaon (below, sec. 211). Indeed, the contemporary Karaite leaders considered him their main adversary, as testified, for example, by the rhymes of Salmon b. Yerūhim: "The great mantle of Saadia has been robbed.... and wisdom lost from he who says: I shall take up my parable and put forth a riddle". Also what Salmon says in interpreting Psalms 140:6: "Al-Fayyūmī [i.e., Saadia Gaon], after all, denied that there was struggle between the Shamaites and the Hillelites, or that they killed one another; therefore, I have taken the order *Mō'ed* of the Talmud of the Palestinians and explained the *halākhōt* where this has been mentioned and the interpretation of it by Jacob b. Ephraim, and I sent it to Iraq so that al-Fayyūmī may read it".

Saadia Gaon knew the background of 'Anan's secession and viewed it as the reason for the deterioration in the relations with the Muslim regime (so it would seem), which, until that point, were good, until "'Anan started claiming the leadership, and since it was prevented from him, because he was unworthy, he appealed to the Muslims to attain that leadership and invented *halākhōt* equal to their *halākhōt* to the extent that he was able to make them seem similar, in order to attract them, so that they assist him. For example, he invented the fixing of the beginnings of the new months according to the new moon, as do the Arabs, and made efforts to find similar *halākhōt* also in the Bible".

There is not much substantial information about the Karaite communities in Babylonia. As I have noted above, it appears that they were concentrated mainly in Persia. We read in Qirqisānī about the Karaites in Baghdad who examine the situation of the *aviv* (the young cereals) in the vicinity of the city, and claim that it is worth doing it in every place where results similar to those in (the area of) Jerusalem are obtained. He also mentions Karaites in Baṣra, in Kūfa and in 'Ukbarā and outside of Babylonia proper: in Syria, in Persia (especially in Tustar), in Jibāl (i.e. Media) and in Khurāsān. One generation after Qirqisānī, there is an early Karaite court document, of July 951, written in Judaeo-Persian, without citing the location. In a letter apparently from Raqqa, on the Euphrates, written about the year 1030, from Elijah ha-Kohen *bēt dīn* b. Abraham to Jacob *he-ḥāvēr* b. Joseph, the leader of the Jews in Aleppo, we read that the Karaites "too, are under our authority, together with all the Rabbanites"; the writer relates an occurrence involving a Karaite who despoiled an orphaned girl of her house, and how he succeeded in retrieving it for her. In commercial letters of the eleventh century of my collection, there is not much mention of the Karaites. Farah b. Isma'īl, writing from Alexandria in October 1050, mentions a Karaite family—Ḥayyim b. Hilāl (=Hillel) the Karaite spinner (*al-ghazzāl*) and his sister's son, Shamār (=Shemariah), with whom the writer had business dealings. At about the same time, Isma'īl b. Isaac al-Andalusī wrote a letter concerning a shipment of goods and mentions *aṣḥābunā al-qarā'iyīn*, our Karaite friends. We also have a letter of Israel b. Daniel, regarding an order of textiles from Alexandria; he is none other than Israel the *dayyān* (*dayyān* of Alexandria) b. Daniel, also known as al-Qūmisī, one of the Tustar scholars (apparently a member of the Tustaris' family), author of a book of precepts quoted by Yefet b. Ṣā'ir.

He wrote the book of precepts in Sel. 1373, AD 1062. The writer refers to himself as *ra's al-kull* (*rōsh kallā*). Yeshū'ā b. Judah, one of the Karaite leaders in the eleventh century, a thinker and writer, also engaged in business; Jacob b. Isma'īl the Spaniard, writing from Sicily circa 1065, mentions the arrival of Yeshū'ā (Abū'l-Faraj b. Asad) in Sicily, and relates how he helped Yeshū'ā in saving goods of Jewish merchants who arrived in the ship of al-Ishfīlī (the Sevillan). As to the Karaite presence in the Maghrib, there is the mention of the Karaite Joseph b. al-Nafūsī, from Jabal Nafūsa in western Libya, in Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy's letter of about 1057.¹⁶³

3. *The Tustaris*

(164) Among the different Karaite factions, the faction of the Tustaris is the only one about which we have substantial information. There is no doubt that the Tustaris were a separate trend in Karaism. According to Qirqisānī, they were distinguished from the other Karaites mainly by their reservations regarding the principle of *ma'qūl*, i.e., the independent, personal, interpretation of the Bible. Indeed, they pretend, he writes, that they accept the *baḥṭh* (personal search), but they only feign to do so, for to their minds he who follows the intellect removes himself from religion; therefore, they also oppose the external wisdoms. They have unique restrictions regarding the Sabbath and festivals, and they are different in regard to "the sighting of the *aviv*". Among the Sabbath restrictions, he mainly notes the interdiction on serving warm food on the Sabbath and the ban on wearing more garments than is absolutely necessary, such as the

¹⁶³ See Daniel al-Qūmisī, *Pitrōn*, 3-6, 22, 46, 61, 80. See Lewin's discussion, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/31), 386-392, on the text of Pirqoy b. Bāboy. The rhymes of Salmon b. Yerūhim: in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 18, and the polemic about the candle on the Sabbath *ibid.*, 17. The commentary on Psalms: Pinsker, *ibid.*, 14 n. 1. Salmon meant the Palestinian Talmud, *Shabbāt*, i, 3c. The text of Saadia Gaon: Zucker, *Targum*, 145. See Poznanski, *JQR*, 10:238, 1897/8, on Saadia's anti-Karaite writings; *ibid.*, 238f., he noted that no remnants of the geonic activities against the Karaites prior to Saadia have been preserved, and what had apparently spurred Saadia into vigorously writing against them were their successful missionary activities. Poznanski wrote about similar matters in an article he published 16 years later, in *Yerushalayim* (Luncz) 10 (1913/4), 89. Nemoy disputed him somewhat: *JQR*, NS 40 (1949/50), 312ff.; to his mind Saadia wrote against the Karaites not so much because he considered them a real threat, but because of his general tendency to defend the principles of the faith. Also see Abramson, *ʿInyānōt*, 43-60, where there is another fragment from *Essā meshālī*, ENA 2779, f. 12, with an answer regarding the Karaites, who deny the oral law. See Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 61, 838, 908, on the Karaites in Baghdad, and see the mentions of the Karaites in the places I have noted, in the index of the *Anwār*. The deed of the court: Mosseri Ia.1, edited by Shaked, *Tarbiz*, 41 (1971/2), 49ff.; Elijah ha-Kohen: 73, b, lines 3ff.; Faraj b. Isma'īl: 500, a, lines 7-8; *aṣḥabunā al-qarā'iyin*: 655, a, line 5; Israel b. Daniel, see 743, and its preamble; cf. Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 174f.; Nehorai b. Nissim also occasionally mentions al-Qārī, the Karaite, see 291, d, line 17, and Gil, *Palest.*, III, 275, no. 508, b, line 8 (of AD 1067). Yeshū'ā b. Judah, see Gil, *History*, 818ff. Also see Jacob b. Isma'īl's letter: 576, a, lines 11ff.; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 338; Ben-Sasson, *Siṣilya*, 620, in the note to line 24, claims that this Abū'l-Faraj b. Asad could not have been the Karaite personality, because he dealt in commerce; however, a number of figures in that period, public leaders and scholars, dealt in commerce also for their livelihood. Joseph b. al-Nafūsī: 448, b, line 1; he may have been the son of Isaiah Nafūsī, see Gil, *History*, 717f. n. 156; Nathan b. Abraham mentions him in his letter after peace was made with Solomon b. Judah, see *idem*, *Palest.*, II, 363 (no. 200, line 1).

proscription against wearing belts on the Sabbath. Moreover, they were strict about carrying on the Sabbath, and strict about the festivals and the intermediate days (of the Passover and Sukkot holidays), forbidding then whatever was forbidden on the Sabbath, except for Passover, where they permitted cooking and baking. Some of them avoided any contact with gentiles because of impurity, in direct contradiction to 'Anan's view, that only deceased gentiles generate impurity. Some were strict in banning the consumption of fat, including cattle fat, others totally banned eating meat, for common wisdom forbade harming animals. From Qirqisānī, it is clear that in the period when he was writing, the beginning of the tenth century, the Tustaris were concentrated in Persia. Interestingly enough, he here and there ascribes them ideas similar to those of Daniel al-Qūmisī, and those of Abū 'Isā al-İşfahānī; as to the latter, they resemble him in the view that the religion of Moses obligates the Jews alone, and the religion of each nation is suitable to it, either by grace of prophecy or the dictates of reason.

The fact that the Tustaris were a separate trend in Karaism is also confirmed by a date inscribed in a Karaite deed, apparently a date marked by the *bēt dīn*. The deed refers to a deal between Abū'l-Ḥasan Da'ūd b. al-Faraj, and 'Imrān b. Levi ha-Kohen, and it says there, in Arabic script: The eve of Wednesday, the 15th of the month of Av, which is Av for most of Karaites and Elul for some Karaites, and the month of Sha'bān for the gentiles, in the year of Alexander (i.e., Sel.), 1344 (26 July 1032). According to Bashīyaṣī, there was a controversy among the Karaites in AM 5097, AD 1336/7, when in Egypt it was Elul for the Karaites and Tishri in Palestine and the controversy went on for some years. Obadiah of Bertinoro wrote in one of his letters: "Sometimes the Karaites in Egypt celebrate Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur on days other than those held by the Karaites in Jerusalem.... and they say there is nothing wrong with it.... and each person does what he sees fit". Except for the aforementioned deed, we also have fragments of a calendar written in the Tustari circle, with comparisons between the usual Karaite calendar, that of the Tustaris, of the Rabbanites, and that of the Muslims.

In those Tustari calendar fragments, the death of the son of Abū Naṣr, apparently Yāshār b. Ḥesed is mentioned. He died in Kislev AM 4806, AD 1045. Someone who was apparently the deceased's grandson, Sahl b. Faḍl b. Sahl (Yāshār b. Ḥesed b. Yāshār), was one of the Karaite writers, and noted for his commentary of the Pentateuch. According to Ibn al-Hītī, he wrote a book, *Kitāb al-talwīḥ fī 'ilm al-kalām fī al-fāḍihim(!) wa-barāhīnihim* (a book that sheds light on matters of knowledge of the *kalām* (=theology) and knowledge of their terms and arguments (of the Muslim scholars of *kalām*) and also *al-radd 'alā'l-Fayyūmī* (the answer to *al-Fayyūmī*, i.e., Saadia Gaon), and many books about *al-fiqh al-madkhal* (apparently meaning: an introduction to the *halākhā*; Margoliouth translated *madkhal*: foreign, i.e., he read *mudkhal*).

Parts of his writings have been preserved. Citations from his commentaries are included in a Karaite commentary on Deuteronomy written in 1352, that is in the British Library. He also wrote the *Kitāb al-ishāra fī uṣūl al-tawḥīd wa'l-'adl* (a guide book on matters of God's uniqueness and His justice; *tawḥīd* and *'adl* are definitely *mu'tazilī* terms). A manuscript in the British Library contains selected fragments of "a book

that sheds light on matters of uniqueness and Justice”, and of “the book of arguments against Aristotle’s book on things that are beyond nature”. Aside from that, he wrote in Muḥarram 489 (1096), a *maqāla* (a treatise) pertaining to forbidden marriages, where he attacked Isaiah b. Judah (Abū’l-Faraj Furqān b. Asad). He also wrote *Kitāb al-a’immā* (book of the leaders), about which nothing is known.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ The reader may find similar statements in the booklet I published on the Tustaris, Tel Aviv, 1981, with more details about the Tustari family that flourished in eleventh century Egypt. Below, I present a renewed discussion of the economic activity of this family (beginning in sec. 368). See Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 4f., 60ff., 287, 937, 1023, 1215, 1243ff.; see TS Box J 3, f. 47v (formerly TS 13 J 32), in Assaf, *Klausner Jub. Vol.*, 230. An earlier date than this one is in the body of the deed, 13 Kislev, Sel. 1342, i.e., towards the end of 1030. See Bashiyašī, *Aderet*, 36b; Obadiah of Bertinoro, in Yaari, *Iggerōt*, 119. See the Tustari calendar fragments in Gil, *Ha-tustarīm*, 86ff. See Ibn al-Hiṭī, in Margoliouth, *JQR*, 9 (1879), 435, 443, and also Poznanski, Schwartz *Festschr.*, 476f. and n. 3; *idem*, *JQR*, 19 (1907), 71; *MGWJ*, 65 (1921), 134f.; *REJ*, 72 (1921), 204; also: Margoliouth, *Cat.*, nos. 334, 589, 896; Mann, *Texts*, II, 39f., 99f., 142 and n. 27, 150f., 304.

CHAPTER SIX

ANNALS OF THE JEWS OF BABYLONIA AND PERSIA

1. *The legal and social status of the Jews of Babylonia and Persia, as it developed in the first three centuries of Islamic rule*

(165) The Arab conquest created a social and political framework totally different from its predecessor and the Jews of Babylonia were forced to accommodate themselves. An inseparable part of the ideology that served as a foundation of the Muslim state was the view regarding the legal status of the protected people. In my book on Palestine, I dealt at length and in detail with the initial development of this view. One of the important early students of Islam, von Kremer, well and precisely described the ideological background of the Islamic state:

In the first century the Islamic state was a purely military state. Aside from Sparta, there had never been one like it; yet Islam did not recognize within it any aristocracy. The Muslims were a nation of warriors who cast their livelihood and economy on the conquered nations.... The central idea of 'Umar's regime was to further the religious-military development of Islam at the expense of the conquered nations. It was the basis of its severe directives regarding Christians and those of other faiths, that they be reduced to the status of pariahs, forbidden from having anything in common with the ruling nation; it was even the basis for his decision to purify the Arabian Peninsula of the unbelievers, when he presented all the inhabitants of the peninsula who had not yet accepted Islam with the choice: to emigrate or deny the religion of their ancestors. The industrious and wealthy inhabitants of Najrān, who maintained their Christian faith, emigrated as a result of this decision from the peninsula, to the land of the Euphrates, and 'Umar also deported the Jews of Khaybar. In this way 'Umar based that fanatical and intolerant approach that was an essential characteristic of Islam, now extant for over a thousand years, until this day (this was published in 1868). It was this spirit, a severe and steely one, that incorporated scorn and contempt for non-Muslims, that was characteristic of 'Umar, and instilled by 'Umar into Islam; this spirit continued, for many centuries, to be Islam's driving force and vital principle.

Actually, this spirit, of a sense of superiority based on government and power and a desire to be separated from the protected people considered low-caste, was strongly felt throughout this period. This spirit ruled with no restraints in the time of the Umayyads, but it was also felt very well during the rule of Baghdad. In the year 240, i.e., AD 854/5, the protected people were still required to teach their children only Aramaic (*suryānī*) and Hebrew, and they were forbidden to learn Arabic. Thus was the story of Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Māzinī al-Baṣrī, one of the great grammarians, who arrived in Baghdad from Baṣra. It is told of him, that although he was

dirt poor, he refused to fulfil the request of a Jew to teach him the book of the renowned grammarian Sībawayh for 100 dinars; he refused because the book contained verses of the Qur'ān. About ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the 'righteous' among the Damascene caliphs, it is said that in addition to the ancient ban of riding a saddled beast, he forbade the protected people to enter a bath house on Friday until after the prayers. Special guards were appointed to ensure that during the slaughter of fowl or cattle, the Jews and Christians would mention the name of Allah and the name of Muḥammad, and the ruler he appointed in Egypt, Ḥayyān, wrote him that if this arrangement continued in Egypt the protected people would accept Islam, and the income from their taxes would cease. For these materialistic considerations ʿUmar ordered that he be given thirty lashes, for God wants everyone to accept Islam.

Something of the atmosphere that prevailed in this area in Baghdad was absorbed and reflected in the widespread *ḥadīth* tradition, that can be found in the Baghdadi al-Khaṭīb—the 'preacher', in his great book about the personalities of Baghdad, such as the statement of Abū Muḥammad Jaʿfar b. ʿUmar al-Qurashī:

Soon the Muslims will begin a war against the Jews, many of them will be killed by the Muslims, until the Jews (are forced) to hide behind rocks and trees, but the rock and the tree will say: Oh, servant of God, here is a Jew, come and kill him; except for the *gharqada* (a kind of thorny bush) for it is of the Jews trees.

Or a claim of a religious nature, in the name of an oil merchant from Wāsiṭ, al-Husayn b. Aḥmad, who had settled in Baghdad: "it is permitted to sit with one leg folded over the other; only the Jews forbid it, for according to them that is how God sat—so they say—after he created the heaven and the earth in six days, and rested on the Sabbath". A tradition related by ʿĪsā b. Yūnus (he died in AD 806) in the name of the Prophet, says that a Muslim may dye his gray hair, "and do not behave like the Jews". Abū Hurayra said in the name of the Prophet: "Whenever a Jew passes by a Muslim he (the Jew) plots to kill him. The Prophet calls Jesus 'my brother'; he is the one whom the Jews killed". Abū Bakr b. ʿAyyāsh al-Kharrāzī (c. 800) was asked if one should visit an ill Rāfiḍī (=Shiite). His answer: he has the status of a Christian or a Jew, it is not a religious precept, there is no reward.

The Jews sell what they are not allowed to eat: a Baṣra man, ʿAbdallah b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭābī (first half of the ninth century), cites in the name of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the saying of the Prophet: they are forbidden to eat the fat, and they sell it. When the Damascene caliph Muʿāwīya wanted to belittle one of the adherents of al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī (b. Abī Ṭālib) he called him in his letter: Jew, son of a Jew.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Gil, *History*, 139-163, see there the references to earlier studies. Von Kremer, *Gesch.*, 332f. Ban on Arabic: Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* (MS BL Or 3004), 60b; he adds that this ban led many to convert to Islam. Cf. Somogyi, *JRAS*, 1932, 63; al-Baṣrī: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh*, MS BL Or 4618, 157a; MS Paris 1505, 134a-134b, 141b. He adds that then, i.e., 239, which was 853/4, the time of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, many of the protected people converted. ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz: Ibn al-Wāsiṭī, 392; Jaʿfar b. ʿUmar: al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh*, VII, 207 (citing Abū Hurayra); al-Husayn b. Aḥmad: *ibid.*, VIII, 6; dyeing hair: al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh*, IV, 77; V, 405; see on ʿĪsā b. Yūnus *ibid.*, XI, 152ff. Abū Hurayra: *ibid.*, VIII, 316;

(166) An issue that preoccupied the Muslim regime very much was the status of the houses of prayer—for the establishment of new synagogues or churches was disallowed as early as the time of the conquest. Nevertheless, there were, of course, synagogues in Baghdad, just as there were in other cities founded or extended under the Muslim regime, such as Fustat and al-Qāhira in Egypt. ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ordered one of his governors: “Do not destroy any Jewish or Christian house of worship, not even sanctuaries of the fire worshippers, if they were given permission (to maintain them) in the peace agreement, but do not let them build new ones”. In the days of Hārūn al-Rashīd, al-Maʾmūn, and al-Mutawakkil, the regime issued orders to destroy the protected people’s houses of prayer. An example of an ancient synagogue that existed until it was destroyed in 1117/8 was the synagogue in Madāʾin, which is Māhōzē (below, sec. 285).

At this point one should summarize the contradictory ideas of the Muslim scholars as arranged by Ibn Hubayra, i.e., ʿAwn al-dīn Yahyā b. Muḥammad, the vizier of the caliphs al-Muktafī and al-Mustanjid (1136-1170), that we read in the manuscript of his book about “The clear formulation of the controversies”:

All agree, that no new synagogue or church should be built in the Islamic countries, in the cities, either open or fortified. Opinion is divided over whether it is permissible to build a new house of worship near the cities. Mālik and the Shāfiʿī and Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal] have said: that, too, is forbidden. But Abū Ḥanīfa said that if the place is near the city one should consider it like a fortified city, and the Friday prayer can be prayed there.... (here the text is faded, it may be that he meant the Jews’ *teḥūm shabbāt*, the “permitted limits” for walking on the Sabbath); in other words, the intent is three parasangs or less, for then it is not permissible to build a new building there. But it is permitted to build in a place further away but if between the houses (of the city) and that place there are less than three parasangs, then the rule is like the rule of a city and it is forbidden to build therein new houses of worship. There has also been disagreement regarding synagogues and churches in the Islamic countries that toppled down over time or were destroyed, whether it is permissible to restore them or to build them anew. Abū Ḥanīfa and Mālik and the Shāfiʿī say it is allowed, but Abū Ḥanīfa set the condition that the permit would be granted only if that country was taken peacefully (by *ṣulḥ*), but if it was conquered in battle (*ʿumwa*), it is forbidden. If the area was originally unbuilt and then a fortified city was built, and they wished to construct therein churches and synagogues, it seems that his opinion, in its plain meaning is, that it is proper not to allow them to build a new church or synagogue, for the status of such a place should be like that of built up and settled places; it is even forbidden to let them pray and assemble in such a place. As to Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], in the clearest version of the two that he left, he says that it is absolutely forbidden for them to reconstruct a (prayer) house or build a new building. Aḥmad’s foremost disciples held the same view, the same holds for the disciples of the Shāfiʿī, Abū Saʿīd al-Iṣṭakhrī and Abū ʿAlī Ibn Abī Hurayra and others; according to another version of Aḥmad’s, if such a house of prayer was partially broken down, it is permitted to reconstruct it, but if it had tumbled down completely, it is forbidden to build it anew; this was the opinion held by the most prominent

killing of Jesus: *ibid.*, XI, 379. The fat: *ibid.*, IX, 220; X, 22; visiting the sick: *ibid.*, XIV, 308; Muʿāwiya: Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IV, 26 (Qays b. Saʿd b. ʿUbāda, who responds: *wathan* [idol] son of a *wathan*, you accepted Islam against your will and you leave it voluntarily).

of his disciples; they also ascribe to him a third opinion, that it is unconditionally forbidden to build.

The strictest of them all, it seems, was Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal; according to one of the traditions, he even had a loyal Jewish companion and partisan. This was Joseph b. Moses (Mūsā) al-ʿAṭṭār (perfume merchant) al-Ḥarbī. (Al-Ḥarbī might mean that he came from the al-Ḥarbiyya district of Baghdad; but it might also mean: from a Christian country.) This Joseph accepted Islam at a young age and was a student of Ibn Ḥanbal himself; he traveled abroad to attain enlightenment (*fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*); but he was too steadily attached to Ibn Ḥanbal, until he grew weary of him. From what Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī said, it appears, in fact, that Ibn Ḥanbal was the one the protected people leaned towards; according to him, when Ibn Ḥanbal died (July 855), masses of Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians mourned him.

Furthermore, there was an old tradition of restrictions on engaging protected people in the government service. Characteristic of this tradition is a story in the book of Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government* (*Siyāsat nāmeḥ*), about ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the conquering caliph, and a Jewish tax collector who collected taxes in Baghdad, Wāsiṭ, Hīt, al-Anbār, and as far away as Baṣra. After Muslims complained about a Jew being appointed to such a post, ʿUmar ordered his dismissal. Saʿd Ibn Abī'l-Waqqāṣ examined the issue of Jewish tax collectors and found that only this one Jew knew the work properly, and so wrote to ʿUmar; yet, ʿUmar replied: The Jew is dead, meaning: act as if the Jew was dead. In fact, Saʿd appointed a Muslim in his place who was even more successful than the Jew.

In 739, during the time of Caliph Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik, a Jewish governor is mentioned in Marw, in Khurāsān, by the name of ʿAqīva, of whom it was said that he discriminated in favor of Jews; he would collect the *jizya* from the local 30,000 Muslims, while the 80,000 non-Muslims (*al-mushrikūn*, idol worshippers) were exempt. Naṣr b. Sayyār, governor of Khurāsān, then dismissed the Jewish governor and set the tax collection on a proper course, i.e., he exempted the Muslims from the tax, and cast the burden onto the unbelievers.

On the other hand, the religionists' complaints about the employment of protected people came up again and again, and sometimes the caliphs ordered their dismissal. This was the case in the days of Hārūn al-Rashīd and also of al-Ma'mūn. Al-Muqtadir, too, in 296, i.e., AD 908/9, decreed that Jews and Christians should not be employed in public posts, except for physicians and money changers.

At the same time we see in the ideological-juridical-administrative background that further steps were devised to accentuate the inferiority of the protected people. The ransom for the murder of a *dhimmī* was half that required for a Muslim. One version has it that at the beginning, half the ransom was paid to the Muslim treasury and the other half to the family, but later ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz canceled the treasury's half. On the other hand, there is the case of the Christian physician Ibn Athāl, physician of Caliph Mu'āwīya; the Banū Makhzūm, the murderer's tribe, paid a ransom of 12,000 dirham for him, of which Mu'āwīya took 6,000, and the treasury took 6,000. That was the custom until the days of ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz,

but he canceled the rights of the ruler and ordered that the entire sum be paid to the treasury; it is implied that the murder victim's family got nothing.

Especially oppressive for the protected people was the dress code, i.e., the obligation to wear clothes of a certain color (for the Jews it was usually yellow—*ʿasalī*, i.e., the color of honey, and blue for Christians) or to bear distinctive signs (about which I have written at length in my book on Palestine).¹⁶⁶

(167) Yet what holds for many historical issues also holds here. One should not get the impression the Jews were under constant pressure of hatred and edicts in this period. The fact that the caliphs kept renewing the decrees regarding the dress code, houses of prayer or public posts, shows that there may have been rules, but there was also life. As may be seen in not a few circumstances scattered about the different sections of this book, there were many cases of close ties between Jews and Muslims, of Jewish integration into the economy, and even in policy and administration, and of a Jewish contribution to the cultural, scientific and literary life of the period. Even in the area of the traditions, just as we have found *ḥadīths* condemning the Jews and the ties with them, we can also find the opposite phenomenon. A place of honor in the ramified *ḥadīth* literature is held by the traditions ascribed to the ancient Israelites, the *isrāʾīliyyāt*. Much has been written on the subject. If we look at what the people of Baghdad and Iraq contributed in this area, we will find, for example, that Saʿīd b. ʿUthmān b. ʿAyyāsh, of the second half of the tenth century, ascribed to

¹⁶⁶ ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd-ʿal-ʿAzīz: Ṭabarī, *Taʾriḫ*, II, 1372; on the razing order, see: Ibn Taghrī Bardī, under the year 119; Ṭabarī, *Taʾriḫ*, III, 1419; cf. Goldziher, REJ, 30 (1895), 6f.; Schreiner, REJ, 31 (1895), 220; Gottheil, JQR, 19 (1907), 491f. See Ibn Hubayra MS BL Or 101, 99b. Joseph b. Moses: al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾriḫ*, XIV, 308. The al-Ḥarbiyya quarter, whose residents were known for their zealotry, was indeed a stronghold of Ibn Ḥanbal supporters. Jāhīz testifies that they were extreme and wild, see *Ḥayawān*, III, 20, and cf. Goldziher, ZDMG, 62 (1908), 148f., who mentions another disciple par excellence of Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī, who died in 285, i.e., 898 (see more below, sec. 284). The death of Ibn Ḥanbal: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS Paris 1505, 148b, Abū Saʿīd al-Iṣṭakhrī, is al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. Yazīd, see al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, in the Index. Abū ʿAlī b. Abū Hurayra, is al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn, see *ibid.* ʿUmar and the customs collector: Nizām al-Mulk, *Book of Govt.*, 175ff. (nos. 28-31). The ʿAqīva affair: Ṭabarī, *Taʾriḫ*, II, 1688f. Cf. Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 36; Zand, *Peʿamim*, 45 (1987/8), 17. Harūn al-Rashīd, al-Maʾmūn: Ibn al-Waṣīṭī. 393. Al-Muqtadir: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, BL Or 4619, II, 41b; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, under the year 296; cf. Bowen, *Life*, 101. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Shudhūr*, MS Cambridge Or 1476[7], 36a, writes about a decree against employing protected people in public posts and about the dress edict decreed by al-Muqtadir in 276, i.e. 889/890; however, the caliph at the time was al-Muʿtamid. The murder of Ibn Athāl: Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, XV, 13; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, 171f. Cf. Goldziher, *Zeitschr. f. vergl. Rechtswiss.*, 8 (1889), 409f. See there more references to his sources. Regarding dress: Gil, *History*, 158f., with references to sources; cf. also Lichtenstädt, *Historia Judaica*, 5:35, who has also details about the *zunnār* obligation—the belt the protected peoples were required to wear, on the shape of the *qalānis*—the headdress they were required to don, on the saddles and the shoelaces (mainly according to Abū Yūsuf's *Kiṭāb al-kharāj*); also see the entry *Ghiyār* in *Et*² (by M. Perlman). A Spanish source from the second half of the ninth century AD, rules that Jews and Christians who try to look like Muslims, and who do not wear the discriminatory signs (*riqāʿ*) and the belt (*zunnār*) should be punished; it had to be a wide belt so as to make it easily distinguishable. Those of them caught riding should be punished: he will be given 20 lashes with a whip and should be incarcerated; if he is caught again, he should be whipped very much and incarcerated for an extended time. See al-Andalusī, 128.

Muḥammad a *ḥadīth* whereby the only person for whom the sun stood still was Yūsha^c b. Nūn. In al-Ṭayyib b. Ismaʿīl al-Qaṭṭabī: a story about a man who accepted Islam. When asked by the Prophet what he expected as a reward, he said, a she-camel and someone to milk it for payment. The Prophet then told him that he could learn from an old Jewish woman from among the *banū isrāʾīl*; an event that happened during the Exodus, when the Jews were required to fulfil their obligation to Joseph and take his bones along with them. The only person who knew where the bones were was an old woman, and the recompense she requested of Moses was that she would be with him in Paradise, under that condition she showed him the place.

Muslim traditions preserved facts attributed to the caliphs and other personalities of early Islam, wherein we can learn about honoring the rights promised to the protected people. It is, of course, possible to cast doubt in the veracity of the acts themselves, yet in all events it is possible to learn from the traditions about the educational-informational pattern in the first centuries of Islam in this area, along with the hostile traditions, from which I have brought some examples above.

A tradition of this kind, relating to the days of ʿUmar, the conqueror, was preserved by the people of Buṣrā, in the Ḥawrān, as recorded from them by the British traveler J.L. Poster, in the mid-nineteenth century. He relates having been shown the path leading to the "house of the Jew" during his visit to Buṣrā. The tradition says that the governor of Buṣrā wished to build a mosque on the place where a Jew's house stood, and when the Jew refused to give him the house, the Muslims destroyed it and built a mosque there. The Jew then went to al-Madīna and sought to be received by ʿUmar. They sent the Jew to the graves outside the walls of the city where he found the caliph, dressed, as was his wont, in rags. When he heard the complaint, ʿUmar said nothing and asked for ink and parchment. The Jew did not have ink and parchment, so ʿUmar took the jawbone of an ass and wrote upon it: Destroy the mosque and build the Jew's house in its place—and so it was done. They still show the remains of the house.

There is also a tradition about ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib: his shield, that was on a camel, fell to the ground, a Jew passed by and took it. ʿAlī sued him at the *qāḍī*: ʿAlī sat and the Jew stood, for the Prophet said: "Do not grant them equality in the matter of sitting, shunt them aside, and if they pass by you hit them, and if they hit you, kill them". ʿAlī brought two witnesses, Qunbar, his freed slave, and his own son, al-Ḥasan, but the *qāḍī* refused to receive them and ruled in the Jew's favor. Then the Jew admitted that it was ʿAlī's shield, he accepted Islam and even fought alongside ʿAlī at Ṣiffīn. Then there was the story of ʿAlī's great grandchild, ʿAbdallah, who went to the first of the Abbasid caliphs, al-Saffāh, asking for one million (a thousand thousands) dinars. The caliph told him that he had no such sum of money in the Muslim treasury, nevertheless he asked and received a loan for the sum from a Jewish merchant.

We might also present a story regarding one of Caliph al-Manṣūr's courtiers, in the sixties of the eighth century, Abū Dulāma, originally an Ethiopian slave who rose in social status and was known for his tricks. Instead of paying the physician who treated his son, he sent the doctor with a payment order to one of the Jewish financiers, who naturally owed him

nothing. The matter reached the *qāḍī* in Kūfa, who believed the Jew, but paid the doctor out of his own pocket.

Sometimes the scholars of those times display a knowledge of Hebrew, such as the case of al-Aṣmaʿī, one of the great early students of the Arabic language (he died in 828), of whom Hārūn al-Rashīd asked, what was this *tafshīl* that he brought him. Al-Aṣmaʿī explained that it was a Jewish invention, a warmed mixture of seed, properly known in Hebrew as *tafshīl*, just as in Hebrew *Antāqiya* is *Antāqiya* (Antioch; i.e., the Jews do not distinguish between the *ṭ* and the *t*). A *ḥabr* by the name of Shīlā had ordered the *banū isrāʾīl* to prepare a *tafshīl* for themselves when they were wandering in the desert. The caliph paid al-Aṣmaʿī 1,000 dinars for this information.

It was said of the translator Abān b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Lāḥiqī, of Baṣra, who flourished at the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, and who translated *Kalīla and Dimna* and other books from Persian literature, that he and his entire family were Jews who knew the *tawrāh* by heart, but as to the Qurʾān, they did not even know those of its verses that are in the prayers. His contemporary was Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Salām, Hārūn al-Rashīd's *mawlā*, who translated from the literature of the *ṣābiyūn*, but also the *tawrāh* and the *injīl* and the writings of the prophets and the 'disciples', from "Hebrew and from Greek and from *ṣābiʿī*" (Aramaic, apparently). The author of the *Fihrist*, Ibn al-Nadīm, who inquired of the Jews about their books, and other writers of the period, such as al-Masʿūdī and others, whom I often cite, are also representatives of the enlightened public among the Muslim scholars of the period. These scholars treated the Jews *ad rem*, and as their writings show, they were mainly motivated by a thirst for knowledge, this being the salient distinction between them and some of the Greek and Roman writers.

In this period the Jews also participated in the councils and symposia on matters of cardinal interest, on religious issues, philosophy, science and poetry, that I mention in this book a number of times. There is a story about Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Mālikī, a Spaniard who embarked on a lengthy journey in the east at about 970, and while on his way back to Spain he was asked in Qayrawān about what he had seen in Baghdad, and expressed shock at the fact Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians participated in the discussions and symposia.¹⁶⁷

(168) This picture, of a mixture of Muslim religious zealotry and a legalistic attempt to honor the principles that had guided the Muslims at the beginning of their way in behavior regarding non-Muslims, is also valid for

¹⁶⁷ The *isrāʾīlyāt*, see Kister's article: *IOS*, 2:215, 1972, with references to more sources and studies. Yūshaʿ b. Nūn: al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾrīkh*, IX, 99. Joseph's remains: *ibid.*, IX, 362. The house of the Jew: Porter, *Five Years*, 234f. ʿAlī's shield: Ibn Ḥamdūn, 71b-72a; a million dinars: Ghunayma, 103. I have not found this tradition in the Muslim traditional literature. Abū Dulāma: Ibn Khalliqān, II, 325f.; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, X, 134f.; *Tafshīl*: Marzubānī, XI, 994. Abān b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd: Ibn al-Nadīm, 119, 163; al-Khaṭīb, *Taʾrīkh*, VII, 44f.; see the dispute regarding his Jewishness between him and Abū ʿUbayda, in Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, XX, 78; the translations of Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh: Ibn al-Nadīm, 21f. Cf. Goldziher, *ZDMG*, 32 (1878), 349, 360. There, Goldziher emphasizes that the atmosphere of study and enlightenment prevailing in the golden age of the Abbasid caliphs, is what led the finest Islamic scholars to become interested in the Jews, their faith, and their books. Al-Mālikī: Humaydī, 101f.; cf. Kremer, *Gesch.*, 241; Goldziher, *MW*, 54:27, 1964.

the first generations of Muslim rule in the conquered countries. The Damascene caliphs, that the chronicles written in the days of the Abbasids tried to present as though they were abusing Islam, or at least apathetic towards it, were also zealous, as a matter of fact. 'Abd al-Mālik's brother Muḥammad, who was appointed governor of Iraq in 73, i.e., AD 692/3, treated the Christians very cruelly, and sought to force Islam upon them. Of him it is said that he burned down an Armenian church with the worshippers inside.

As to the Jews, in the same period there were Muslim courts that interfered with the judicial autonomy that had been theoretically granted to the courts of the protected people, in the matter of the 'rebellious' wife. Sherira Gaon notes in his *Letter*, that in the days of Rāwā in Pumbedita, it was ruled that a *gēṭ* should be granted to a woman (who had requested it) immediately, "not like the oral tradition about R. Zabīd's daughter-in-law" (*Ketubbōt* 63*b*). This issue is also mentioned in a responsum Sherira Gaon sent to Qayrawān, adding the information that the then gaon of Sura was Rav Hūnā (he apparently meant: R. Ḥanīnā, see the Babylonian Talmud *ibid.*); in essence: It appears that the Muslim courts would interfere when Jewish women appealed to them, and apparently there were cases that forced the Jewish *bēt dīn*, or the husband, to acquiesce to the woman's demand, for it seemed to the *qāḏīs*—it should be assumed—in line with natural justice.

Another area of conflict between the Jewish halachic tradition and Muslim law, then in a process of development, was the law of inheritance. The two systems clashed in two areas—the rights of women to the father's or husband's inheritance, and the rights of apostatized family members; elsewhere I have already shown the essence of the Muslim view in these areas. It appears that the ruling view in the Babylonian yeshivot was that the apostate does not inherit from his father. It seems that the priority of faith over that of family, for better or for worse, was also accepted by the early Karaites, if we look into the commentary to Genesis of Yefet b. 'Alī, who notes that the clan of Abraham's father had no part in his inheritance because they were not believers.

The regime often interfered with the affairs of the protected people's leadership. Below, we shall see a number of such cases, especially regarding the controversies in Babylonian Jewry in the tenth century. There is information for an earlier period about the regime's interference in the affairs of Christians during internal community disputes. The most severe instance was during the time of al-Manṣūr, after the death of the Ya'qūbite patriarch, John; the succeeding patriarch, Georgios, was imprisoned, as was Theodorus, the patriarch of the Malikīs (the 'Greeks') and Jacob, the Nestorian catholicos. Also in the days of al-Mutawakkil there is the affair of the expulsion of a Christian notable, the Baghdadī physician Bukhtīshū' (b. Jibrīl). For a reason unknown, the caliph confiscated all of his property and had him deported to Bāḥrain.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IV, 361*f.*; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicle* (Bedjan), 112; (Budge), 104; cf. Duval, *JA*, 8^e ser., t. 78*f.*; Goldziher, *Gesamm. Schr.*, III, 390; Goldziher's reference (Duval) should be corrected according to what is noted here. Yohanan bar Penkayē describes the period of Mu'āwiya, the first Damascene caliph, as one of tranquility, freedom and tolerance. Christians, of all the sects, participated in his army; see Scher, *JA*, 2^e ser. t. 10

(169) In contrast to both the Umayyad and thereafter the Abbasid regimes' strict approach regarding the protected people, it appears that the seceding Muslim sects, or some of them, sought to limit their struggle only to their Muslim rivals, and avoided harming the protected people. A tradition attributed to Abū Ismaʿīl al-Baṭīḥī, one of the Ibādī leaders in Spain, who was a descendant of the *azāriqa*, the people of Nāfi^c b. al-Azraq, says that they may kill any Muslim who was not of their faith, even women and children, but they were absolutely forbidden to kill Jews or Christians or Zoroastrians (the end of the seventh century).

In 737, mention is made of the Jewish 'wizards', apparently astrologers, who flourished at the Umayyad court. A certain Bashīr claimed that he was Tiberius, the son of Constantine, the Byzantine emperor, he fled to Harrān and turned himself over to Sulaymān, the son of Caliph Hishām, and Sulaymān sent him to his father, the caliph. The Jews were then required to divine by the spirit of Bashīr's forefathers. Eventually it was found out that the man was a fraud and impostor and he was executed.

(1907), 175. In Muʿāwiyā's time, Saʿfiyya, the Jewish woman Muḥammad took as wife, was still alive. She had inherited 100,000 dirhams, bequeathing a third to her brother, who remained a Jew; see al-ʿIṣāmī, MS Paris 1563, 154a. The *gēṭ* prescription: Sherira, *Letter*, 101; Lewin there cites the responsum of the gaon to Qayrawān, according to *Teshūvōt ge'ōnīm qadm.*, 31b, no. 91 and other sources; also see *Shaʿarē* s., 56a, no. 15: "after our Masters the *sāvōrā'im*, when the scholars saw that Jewish women were addressing the gentiles in order to force their husbands to grant them a *gēṭ*, and the *gēs* were granted by force.... a forced *gēṭ* sufficed.... in the days of our Lord and Master Rabba son of our Lord Hūnā.... and we force him to immediately issue a *gēṭ*.... and this is the way we have been acting for about more than 300 years"; implied is that the gaon means (approximately) the time before AD 680; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 121f., who has more references. The inheritance legislation: Gil, *History*, 163 and the references *ibid.* in note 36. See the responsum in TS 10 G 4.3 no. 292, a collection of responsa compiled by Solomon b. Adret, in Ginzberg, *Ginzē Schechter*, II, 122; the formula "a *meshummād* does not inherit from his Jewish father", which is also found in *Shaʿarē* s., 48b (no. 25), seems to indicate conversion to Christianity; the responsum, in *Shaʿarē* s. is ascribed to Naṭrūnai Gaon, while Solomon b. Adret ascribed it to Hayy Gaon, and to the commentary of R. Isaac, unknown to us, see the assumptions of Ginzberg, *ibidem*. Stopping the inheritance of a son who converted to Christianity: "like in the religion of Ishmael, since they (i.e., the Muslims) do not allow a baptized (son) to inherit". See *Tesh. ha-g. mizr. u-maʿrāv*, 4b (no. 11); *Tesh. ha-g. Lyck*, 10 (no. 23); and see *Shaʿarē* s. 63b (no. 40), "the rule regarding the *ketubbā* of a married woman who baptized"; the gaon sees a corollary to the rule of "the rebellious woman", where the woman loses her *ketubbā*. The *halākḥā* of the people of Palestine is otherwise, it says there, which the Babylonian gaon strongly censures. They find a corollary with a woman who died, which, according to their view, her *ketubbā* belongs to her paternal family; cf. Friedman, *Marriage*, I, 417f., who believes that the Babylonian gaon was not familiar enough with the basic approach of the Palestinians, and did not know that when they spoke of the *ketubbā* they meant the dowry brought by the woman into the marriage. See the discussion of the stance of the geonim regarding the status of an apostate as an inheritor: Irshai, *Shenāṭōn ha-mishp.*, 11-12 (1984-1986), 442-447, and his discussion regarding the influence of Muslim religious law in this area, *ibid.*, 458. See Yefet b. ʿAlī's commentary, in Poznanski, *JQR*, 8 (1895/6), 693. See on the authorities' intervention with the Christians: Michael the Syrian, 474-476 (translation: II, 524-527); Bar Hebraeus, *Church Chronicle*, I, 317; II, 159ff.; see the anonymous Syriac chronicle (Brooks), 236 (Guidi's *Translation*, 179). Theophanes, 439, 446, apparently also means the same issue when writing about *Abdela*'s decrees against the Christians and the Jews in AM 6258 and 6264, i.e., AD 764 and 770 (in his terms: 30 years into Emperor Constantine's rule, which was the time of al-Manṣūr). ʿAbdīshū's expulsion: Tabarī, III, 1437, cf. Kraemer, *Hist. of Tabarī*, XXXIV, 152f., n. 507. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS Paris 1505, 157 b; in AH 244, i.e., 858/9.

The edicts against and the oppression of the protected people that we see among the Umayyads were, as stated, mainly the result of spontaneous and sporadic religious zealotry. The Abbasids had a missionary religious consciousness, for according to their beliefs they were the heads of a state that was also a religion. Thus there is a certain consistency and expressions of strictness and severity. The book by Abū Yūsuf, commissioned by Hārūn al-Rashīd, contains a special chapter on Muslim law regarding the protected people, with instructions regarding their taxes, dress, etc. As to the employment of the protected people in public posts, there was a set and repeated pattern among the Abbasids of banning such employment, from al-Manṣūr on down.

Evidence of the occurrence of religious disputations comes from Baṣra. It is said of Muḥammad b. al-Hudhayl al-^ʿAllāf, one of the leaders of the Mu^ʿtazilites, that when he was fifteen he had argument with a Baṣra Jew who had always prevailed over Muslims in religious polemics. Among other things he knew how to answer the Jew that he, i.e., al-^ʿAllāf, accepted Mūsā, but the Mūsā who heralded Muḥammad. He also accepted the Torah, but the Torah that heralded Muḥammad. He had his day over the Jew, causing him to flee Baṣra where he left much money that people owed him. Since al-^ʿAllāf was born in AH 135, it appears that the disputation took place in 150, i.e., AD 767.

About two generations later we find one of the Baṣra Jews saying things that echo an internal Muslim polemic that erupted in the days of al-Ma'mūn, on the question of whether the Qur'ān was or was not created. There occurred a conflict between a Jew and a Muslim, that reached the *qāḍī*, Mūsā b. Abān b. Ṣadaqa, for a ruling. The latter obligated the Muslim to take oath and demanded that he swear by "the name of Allah, aside whom there is no God", and the Jew suggested to him that he demand that he swear in the name of He who creates and is not created, for the expression "aside which there is no God", is taken from the Qur'ān, "yet you argue that it was created". The *qāḍī* was astonished (at the extent of the Jew's knowledge).

In the 70s of the eighth century, there was the affair of Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab, who was appointed governor of Mosul. Michael the Syrian wrote that he was a Jew. According to an anonymous Syriac chronicle (erroneously attributed to Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē) al-Manṣūr appointed him in Sel. 1081, 769/70; (according to Ṭabarī, al-Manṣūr, in AH 151, i.e., AD 772, appointed Mūsā b. Ka'b to oversee the army and taxes; three years hence he was angry with him and sent al-Mahdī, his son, to Raqqa, so that from there he order the firing of Mūsā b. Ka'b from his Mosul post and appoint Yaḥyā b. Khālīd b. Barmak instead; al-Mahdī indeed did as instructed, and Mūsā b. Ka'b was apprehended and placed in chains. It appears that Ṭabarī erred, and confused b. Muṣ'ab with b. Ka'b, and a number of texts copied the error.) According to the Christian who wrote the chronicle, Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab was an evil man, of bad temper; about him, the Syriac writer goes on, Scripture says: he "made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof" (Isaiah 14:17)—such a tyrant had never before existed, neither in the days of idol-worshipping kings nor in the days of the Zoroastrians: he cast fear over the monks and over all people of the Church. Many then fled from Mosul, and the authorities offered a prize of 40 *zūz* for anyone

apprehending a Mosul person and a fine was levied on anyone granting them asylum, and the worst of the Arabs (*de-fayē*) dealt with it, and they wrung money from the people of Mosul. The area also suffered a severe drought in his time, in 772/3, when Christians and Jews (with rams horns) and Arabs prayed together. Mūsā was mainly accused of extreme ardor in collecting taxes; he levied enormous taxes and with the help of spies and informants made lists of all the properties in the area; he even banned fishing. Later, that Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab was appointed governor of Egypt, arriving there on Saturday, 7 Dhū'l-Ḥijja 167 (1 July 784); there he also used a heavy hand in collecting taxes, and in the end he was killed on 19 Shawwāl 168 (28 April 785). This same Mūsā was apparently the man called Moukhesias 'the zealot', in Theophanes, whom, according to him, the caliph sent, in 773 (while he himself was on a journey to the Holy City), to force the Christians to accept Islam and destroy the churches, and it was he who persecuted the Jews and Christians in the area of Ḥims.¹⁶⁹

(170) During al-Mahdī's reign power was essentially in the hands of the vizier, the son of a Jew who had converted to Islam, ABŪ 'ABDALLAH MU'AWIYA B. YASHĀR. We do not know if this had any effect on the situation of the protected people. Many Arabic sources recorded the awful event of the killing of his son, 'Abdallah, by order of the caliph, for the accusation—real or imagined—that he was a *zindīq*, i.e., an infidel who is against the laws of Islam. The son was executed in the presence of his father, while the father was forced at the same time to engage in writing.

In the days of al-Mahdī, there were, we are told, taxes (*kharāj*) imposed on shops, and it appears that the ruling greatly affected the Jews, who were the main retailers.

The days of Hārūn al-Rashīd saw the decrees regarding the dress code, first formulated in detail, including the matter of colors, by order of the ruler, and as included in the book by Abū Yūsuf, and this was the time when the destruction of synagogues and churches is reported.

¹⁶⁹ The Azāriqa: Ibn Ḥazm, *Milal*, IV, 189; cf. the article Azāriqa, in *IEJ* (by R. Rubinacci); also: Morony, *Iraq*, 473; Salem, *John Hopkins Studies*, 40, 66. The Bashīr affair: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicle*, 119 (Budge, 110). As to the Abassids and their ideology regarding the protected people, cf. Goldziher, *REJ*, 28 (1894), 77. See Abū Yūsuf, 82ff. The ban on employing protected people has been discussed in many places; see, for example, a very early discussion of that issue: Belin, *JA*, 4^e ser. t. 17 (1851), 436f., 441, according to a manuscript of Muḥammad Ibn 'Alī al-Naqqāsh, the preacher of the Ibn Ṭūlūn mosque, who wrote his book in 1357/8. See what I have written: Gil, *History*, 161ff. The disputation in Basra: al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh*, III, 367f (al-'Allāf died in 235, i.e., 849/50); Safādī, *Wafayāt*, V, 161f.; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS BL Or 4618, 49a; the story of the *qādī*, 'Isā b. Abān: al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh*, XI, 159; 'Isā died on 4 Muḥarram 221, 29 December 835, see *ibid.*, 159f. The story of Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab: the chronicle ascribed to Dionysius, 108ff., 146, 176; al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, 124ff. Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 46, 375, 381, 521: his father, Abū Mūsā Muṣ'ab b. al-Rabī' al-Khaṭh'amī, was *kātib* of the last of the Damascene caliphs, Marwān, but succeeded in obtaining the *amān* from the victorious Abbasids; this was a family of officials par excellence; صاحب قلم, صاحب حرب; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, II, 54; Azdī, 224 (he does not mention Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab b. Ka'b, see the editor's note there); Mārī Ibn Sulaymān, 71 (just mentions him); Michael the Syrian, 476f. (translation: II, 526), says that Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab was a Jew; Forand, *JAOS*, 89 (1969), 94 discusses the Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab affair, but expresses the opinion that the information about his Jewishness is incorrect, it was only meant to slander him; on the other hand, see Witakowski, 100, and note 84. See Theophanes, 452. Also cf. Fiey, *Mossoul*, 24; *idem*, *Chrétien* (1980), 24; Kawerau, *Chrestomatie*, III, 91.

Evidence regarding the decline of the *dhimmīs* leaders may be found in the rhymes of the contemporary poet Muslim b. al-Walīd al-Anṣārī, who ordered that the exilarch (*jālūt al-yahūdī*) supply him with fine wine (*raḥīq*) for which he (the poet) had paid a considerable sum of money. On the other hand, this is the time when the western Christian sources relate details about the ties between the caliph and Charlemagne, which the Jew Isaac played a major role in fostering.

The days of al-Ma'mūn seem from our perspective to have been a period when common sense, rationalism, won out over zealotry and religious extremism. Above (sec. 80) I have already dealt with the caliph's involvement in the affairs of the protected people, especially regarding the subject of religious organizational freedom. As we have seen, this involvement, according to a Christian source, stemmed from the eruptions in the Jewish community over the exilarchate, i.e., the controversy between David and Daniel. On the face of it, there appears to have been a sharp turn in al-Ma'mūn's policy in the course of his reign. In his first period he adopted a policy of freedom of religious thought and free debate among the different faiths. Salient at the time was the great influence of the Mu'tazilis, and, in general, it appeared that the regime adopted a middle stance of mediation and compromise between the different pressure groups, and the main internal threat to the Abbasid ruler's power and status originated with the extreme Shiites. In the later period of his rule, when attempting to reconcile the extremists, al-Ma'mūn used a strong hand regarding the protected people. There is a tradition about al-Ma'mūn's social regulations he instituted in the baths: the rulers would go there during breakfast, the merchants at noon, in the afternoon (the *ʿaṣr*) the.... (missing) would go in, and at daybreak the militias (*al-ʿayyārūn*) and the embroiderers (*al-tarrāzūn*) would enter. There is also a story about al-Ma'mūn and the Jew: before he became a caliph, he met a pleasant looking and clean Jew, talked to him and suggested that he accept Islam, but the Jew refused to abandon the faith of his fathers; a year later the Jew became a Muslim; when al-Ma'mūn met him again, he explained why he had become a Muslim: he had prepared three copies of the *torāya*(!), with additions and imperfections and sold them at a good price in the *kanīsa*; likewise of the *injīl*; yet when he did the same with the Qur'ān he was immediately apprehended, for this is a book known by heart. A contemporary, Patriarch Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē, tells in his chronicle, in a large fragment preserved in Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus, about the destruction of the Jews' and Christians' houses of worship by order of al-Ma'mūn's chief assistant, the military commander, al-Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn. There is also information concerning the expulsion of many Jews from Baghdad; the worst nation, says the order issued in the name of the caliph, are the Jews, and the worst of them are the Jews of Samāra, and among them the worst are the sons of so-and-so (*fulān*; the name was not preserved), and they must be banished from any post. It is impossible to determine who was meant with any certainty. It may be the Samaritans, for at that time edicts and harsh oppression against them in Palestine are mentioned. On the other hand, a mention of the posts perhaps hints at Samarrā, which became the capital of the Abbasids; actually, it became the capital only after al-Ma'mūn's reign, in the days of al-Mu'taṣim, in 836, but the town of Samarrā, on the east bank of the

Tigris, existed before then, and who knows what complaints al-Ma'mūn had against the Jews of that place.

There is also mention of an order of al-Ma'mūn's to execute a Jew who was visiting the caliph's palace, and of whom a poet complained to the caliph that he believed Muḥammad was a false prophet.¹⁷⁰

(171) Al-Mutawakkil's time seems to have been especially difficult for the protected people, for then an orthodox, exceptionally conservative, Islam had the upper hand. The contemporary sources recorded some of the persecutions against the protected people in 235, AD 849/50, when the caliph decided to enforce the dress codes and the use of wooden saddles while riding—everything was formulated in detail, also regarding the color of the attire and the head covering. He also ordered the destruction of new houses of prayer; levied a tax, *ushr*, on houses, and if they were spacious, he turned them into mosques; he ordered that pictures of imps be drawn on doors; forbade their employment in posts where they would have authority over Muslims; banned teaching to the children of the protected people in a *kuttāb* and forbade Muslims from teaching them. He forbade Christians from carrying the cross and palm fronds in their processions. He even ordered that the graves of the protected people be built flat on the ground so as to differentiate between them and the graves of Muslims.

It appears that the regiments of Turks who constituted the caliph's main military force, and whose political clout was on the rise, disregarded the caliph's edicts and bans. Thus we see that the Turkish commander, Bāghir (or Yāghir), who murdered al-Mutawakkil, had a Jewish business manager (*kātib*, a secretary, scribe), who was one of the *dahāqīn* (the class of Persian landed gentry that survived for many generations after the Muslim conquest) of Bārūsmā and Nahr al-Mālik. Ṭabarī tells of a dispute between that Bāghir and another Turkish commander (Ibn Mārama, or Marāma)

¹⁷⁰ I have written elsewhere about the 'Abdallah b. Mu'āwiya affair, see Gil, *History*, 289f., and see the addendum, Gil, *Te'uda*, 7 (1991), 288. Also see: Iṣbahānī, *Aghānī*, III, 153, with a realistic description of al-Mahdī dragging Abū 'Ubaydallah by his foot and ordering that he be imprisoned; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, III, 517; Sourdel, *Vizirat*, I, 94-103, disregards (likewise, other students) his Jewish origins; he noted that the son was called in the sources by no less than eight names. Ibn Ṭīqtaqā, 247, notes that Mu'āwiya b. Yāshār was responsible for the reform in tax collection; it was he who initiated the *muqāsama*, i.e., tax according to harvest, and not a set tax. Also see Mas'ūdī, *Murīj*, VI, 231f. Cf. Goitein, *Studies*, 180f.; tax on shops: Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 13: in 167 (beginning on 5 August 783). Dress decrees: Abū Yūsuf, 76; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, MS BL Or. 3004, 59a: decrees of al-Mutawakkil regarding dress and the horse-riding ban, etc. in 239, i.e., 853/4. Cf. Fiey, *Chrētiens* (1980), 46. Muslim b. al-Walīd, the *Dīwān*, 161; cf. Goldziher, *REJ*, 43 (1901), 12. The Jew Isaac: Einhardi *Annales*, 190; cf. Steinschneider, *JQR*, 12 (1900), 489f. See on the entire topic of the relations with the Frankish kingdom: Gil, *History*, 285-289, with more references. Destruction of houses of prayer: Gil, *History*, 160f., and see the references in note 34; cf. Goldziher, *REJ*, 30 (1895), 6; Levy, *Chronicle*, 65f.; see the exhaustive discussion on the issue of al-Ma'mūn's policy: Sourdel, *REJ*, 30 (1962), 27ff.; the arrangements in the bath houses: Sibī Ibn al-Jawzī, MS Paris 1506, 204a. The matter of the copies: MS Paris 1505, 94a. More on the destruction of the houses of prayer: Michael the Syrian, 507 (translation: III, 47); Bar Hebraeus (Bedjan), 139, bottom; (Budge), 127; the *Syriac chronicle* ("until 1234"), 10: in the year 1126 (Sel.; i.e., 815) many churches were destroyed, "and also synagogues", in Northern Iraq. See Ibn al-Naqqāsh's *fatwa* (mid-fourteenth century) in Belin, *JA*, 4^e ser., t. 17 (1851), 444f.; also see Grossman's article, *Zion*, 44:94, 1979, on the issue of al-Ma'mūn's attitude towards the Jews. On the persecution of the Samaritans, see Gil, *History*, 822ff.

over land, and among other things it says there that the Jew imprisoned his rival and had him chained, which led to his death from an infection caused by the fetters.

Such edicts that I have mentioned, and others, that were repeated over and over again, also continued in the days after al-Mutawakkil; in 276, AD 889/90, the caliph al-Muṭamid issued an order banning the employment of Jews and Christians in public positions, required them to wear honey-colored clothes, and allowed them to ride only when seated on wooden saddles.

The image of the protected people in the eyes of the Muslims was of a tolerated populace, with much fewer rights than the Muslims, and inferior from the social standpoint. Characteristic in this regard is an event related by Ibn al-Qifṭī in his book about people of science and physicians; the head of the physicians, Sinān b. Thābit b. Qurra, of Ḥarrān, was al-Muqtadir's doctor, who made significant headway in the field of public medicine through the initiative and encouragement of the vizier, °Alī Ibn °Īsā. Further down there is a description of a plague that broke out at the time:

When Sinān's people (the doctors) arrived in Sura, the majority of whose inhabitants were Jews, Sinān wrote to the vizier °Alī Ibn °Īsā, informing him that letters from these people had reached him, from the district (*al-sawād*), wherein it was written that most of the inhabitants of Sura and Nahr al-Malik (in Jewish sources: Nahr Pāqōd) are Jews, and his people there asked for instructions, whether to remain there and cure them, or skip over them and go to others, and that he, Sinān, did not know what to answer them, because he did not know what the vizier's view was regarding the protected people; he added, to the vizier's attention, that the custom in the *bimāristān* (the public hospital he founded in Baghdad) was to treat equally Muslims and protected people. The vizier then issued an order (*tawqīc*), and here is a copy of it: I understood what you were writing about—may God add to your honor—indeed, there is no controversy between us that it is proper to (also) cure the protected people and the animals, too; but the actual obligatory order of priorities is to cure people before the animals, and Muslims before the protected people, and only if there are more (doctors) available than needed for the Muslims should one deal with the category (of people) next in line.

Also belonging to the time of Caliph a-Muqtadir is the affair regarding Isaac the Jew (Ishāq b. al-Yahūdī), one of the merchant brokers in °Ummān. After quarrelling with another Jew there, he fled to India (*bilād al-hind*) and engaged in business there and also in China. Thirty years later he returned to °Ummān with great wealth that he transported on his own ship. This was in the year 300 (AD 912/3). After his arrival, he reached an agreement with Aḥmad b. Hilāl, governor (*sāhib*) of °Ummān, that his cargo not be examined, and be valued at over a million dirham for tax purposes (*yu'ashshar °alayhi*). It is also written there about great quantities of luxuries that he sold from the merchandise that he brought, musk and textile products. Afterwards he had a rival in °Ummān who complained about him in Baghdad to al-Muqtadir. The then vizier, °Alī Ibn al-Furāt, disregarded the accusations, but when they reached the ears of the caliph, he sent one of his men, a black man by the name of al-Filfil with thirty servicemen, to bring Isaac to Baghdad. Then a huge protest of the merchants broke out in °Ummān, because they claimed that this conniving

would eventually lead to paralysis of the port and its commerce. Isaac then decided to return to China, only after they extorted 2,000 dinars out of him, but already at the beginning of his journey he was murdered by an agent of the governor of Sarīra (in the island of Lamūr, near Malaya) after he refused to grant him the sum of 20,000 dinars.¹⁷¹

2. Taxes in the first generations of Abbasid rule

(172) The Babylonian Talmud preserves some of the details of the taxation under Persian rule, such as the names of two main categories of tax, the *ṭasqā*, a tax on land and property, and the *kargā*, the poll tax. Contemporary Jews did not believe that they were morally obliged to be meticulous about paying these taxes, and it appears that evasion was accepted and permitted, according to Rabbā in the Babylonian Talmud (*Nedārīm* 62b): "it is permitted for a scholar to say: I am a worshipper of fire, and I do not pay the *kargā*"; from here we also learn that poll tax was not applicable to the ruling nation, the Persians.

After the conquest, the Muslims became great property holders, because ʿUmar ordered that all land that had belonged to Persians who died in battle, or who had fled, be considered the property of the Muslim community (*sāfiya*), likewise all the land of the king (*Kisrā*) and the members of the royal family. The poll tax was graded according to the payer's ability, the highest level being 48 dirhams, the sum paid by the great landowners, the *dahāqīn* (singular: *dihqān*), those who possessed riding beasts; from a text of al-Balādhurī, in a version that appears to be somewhat distorted, one gathers that the tax levied upon them was in gold, i.e., not in dirhams, silver coins, but dinars. ʿUmar even set regular tax sums according to the crop cultivated—wheat, grapes or dates. Al-Balādhurī even notes the severity with which one used to collect the tax in the days of ʿUmar, by marking the *dhimmīs* on the neck, a clear sign that taxes were to be levied on them. In the first period of Muslim rule, one still used the term *ṭasq* for the land tax, just as in Persian times, and Jawharī brings a letter of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to one of the governors in Iraq, ʿUthmān b. Ḥanīf, regarding two *dhimmīs* who had converted to Islam: "revoke the poll tax (*jizya*), but take the *ṭasq* for their lands". He even knew to note that originally *ṭasq* was a Persian term.

The term *kargā*, which for Persians meant, as stated, the poll tax, became under the Muslims *kharāj*, which later assumed the meaning of

¹⁷¹ Al-Mutawakkil: Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1389f.; Ibn al-Jawzī, *ʿAjā'ib*, MS Paris 1567, 23b-24b; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (MS BL Or 4615), 93b; cf. Goldziher, *REJ*, 30 (1895), 6f. See the discussion regarding the education ban: Grunebaum, *Studien*, 134. See also Sa'īd Ibn Bitrīq, II, 63, who explains that the edicts were decreed because the caliph was angry at Bukhtīshūf the physician. Also see Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicle* (Bedjan), 155; (Budge), 141, who has some more details about the decrees. The story of the Jewish *kātib*: Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1535ff.; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS BL Or 4618, fol. 165. Al-Mu'tamid: Ibn al-Jawzī, *Shudhūr*, MS Cambridge Or 1476(7), fol. 36a (he erroneously writes: al-Muqtadir); *idem.*, *ʿAjā'ib* (above, in this note), 30b. The story of Sinān: Ibn al-Qiftī, 193f.; cf. Goldziher, *REJ*, 43 (1901), 12; Levy, *Chronicle*, 142f. The story of ʿUmmān: Buzurg Ibn Shahriyār, 107-111, cf. Fischel, *Marx Pres. Vol.*, 206; Ghunayma, 134ff. Sarīra: see Freeman-Grenville, *Wonders*, 117, 118.

land tax. This is also seen in a geonic responsum: "lands upon which there was the *kargā*", obviously meaning agricultural land; in the version of al-Māwardī: "Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb maintained the system of land measurement and the *kharāj* (that he found among the Persians)."

In that period, the Muslims did not yet have experienced tax collection officials, and they used to employ Christians to do the work, on which there is evidence also in Abū Yūsuf and in a Syriac church source. In general, it is known that in the Umayyad period some of the revenue from taxes reached the tribes that had rights over the taxes where they settled, and some of the taxes reached the central government. The rights of the tribes, that could be as much as outright confiscation of the property, was usually a reward for their services to the ruler in his wars, as well-explained in an early Jewish source, ascribed to Rabbēnū Gershom, who certainly had copied it from one of the Babylonian geonim: "Ishmaelites who helped the king when he went forth to war.... went with him to Pumbedita and he gave them permission to confiscate the lands of the people who gained their livelihood from them since all the days that they have been there".¹⁷²

(173) In 121, AD 739, there is information about the Jewish governor 'Aqivā in Khurāsān, in Marw (above, sec. 166). Obviously the matter of the taxes helped gain the support of the masses of Muslims and those about to accept Islam in that frontier area, and blending this issue into the incitement against the Jews certainly increased the support of those who laid the grounds for the great Abbasid revolt.

¹⁷² Neuman wrote on the taxes in Persian times: *Agric. Life*, 169ff.; in his opinion, the *kargā* was a global tax imposed on the localities, with the division levied according to the inhabitants' abilities. See, on the other hand, the discussion of Goodblatt, *JESHO*, 22 (1979), 247ff., who believes that the collection was carried out by government officials. See Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 270ff.; cf. Morony, *Iraq*, 102f., who notes that the taxes imposed by 'Umar were four times greater than what was customary in Persian times. Also see regarding the tax burden in the villages: Ibn Khurdādhbih, 14, 42; Ibn Rusta, 105; Ibn Ḥawqal, 234; Māwardī, 169: the transition from setting aside part of the harvest (*muqāsama*), to the payment according to field size (*misāḥa*) was carried out in Persian times by the order of King Qubād (towards the end of the fifth century AD). Despite what is written in the earliest sources about the rise in the sums of money collected after the Arab conquest vis-à-vis the time of the Persian regime, it is clear that in the long run they decreased drastically, something that can only be explained by the general phenomenon of decline in the area of agricultural production. Characteristic of this matter is what Ibn Khurdādhbih says about the *kharāj* in the al-Ahwāz area, which stretches from the east to the Tigris mouth. In Persian times, the area, with its seven districts (*kuwar*), brought in 50 million dirhams, while in Ibn Khundādhbih's time (first half of the ninth century) the area brought in only 30 million dirhams. Morony, *Iraq*, 115f., 123 assumes that the tax was collectively levied on the locale; this assumption has a certain basis regarding Egypt, but as regards the areas conquered from the Persians, I do not believe there is a basis for it in the sources. *Akargā: Sha'arē* s. 46b (no. 14); al-Jawharī, *Shihāḥ*, see the entry *ṭasq*: IV, 1517; al-Kashshī al-Tūsī, *Rijāl*, 77; Sourdel, *BEO*, 14 (1952/54), 123f. n.3 sought to prove that the source of the word, *ṭasq*, was Greek and not Persian. But that is not the case. Cf. the discussion on *kargā*, *gaziwātā*, *ṭasqā*, in Obermeyer, 221f.; he does not account for the Aramaic root *gzy*, in the talmudic sources, which I believe is at the base of the Arabic word *jizya*. Christian tax collectors: Abū Yūsuf, 199; Chabot, *Synodikon*, 225, 490; see in Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2051f., about the appointment of the Christian 'Abdallah b. Waythama to be in charge of the tax collection in the Pumbedita area (the Falājij) which I have already mentioned (above, sec. 63); he was appointed by Khālīd Ibn al-Walīd during the conquest. Rabbēnū Gershom: *Tōsafōt* to the Babylonian Talmūd, *Bāvā Batrā* 163b; cf. Szadzunski, *AJSLL*, 49 (1922/3), 336ff. Elsewhere, I have elaborated on the tribes' rights in the taxes: Gil, *History*, 137 and n. 146.

Tax issues were often dealt with in Muslim legal literature. Let us see how Ibn Hubayra summarizes the disagreements between the schools of law in a number of matters touching upon the tax levied on the *dhimmīs*:

All agree that the *jizya* should be levied on the people of the book, namely Jews and Christians; all of them also agree that *jizya* should be levied on the Zoroastrians (*al-mājūs*), though regarding them there are disagreements, whether they are people of the book or whether they have something similar to a book. Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik and Aḥmad said: they are not people of the book, yet they have something similar to a book. As to the Shāfiʿī, two opinions are transmitted in his name: the one, that the rule regarding them is like that of the people of the book; the other—as is the opinion of the rest of the group.... and they disagreed, if someone came from the Christian countries (*ḥarbī*) with money to do business to a Muslim country, whether something should be levied on him. Abū Ḥanīfa said: one does not take from them, unless they bought something; Mālik and Aḥmad said: you take *ʿushr* (a tenth of the sum) from them; yet Mālik said: you take *ʿushr* from them if they entered with an unconditional writ of safety (*amān*) and no (prior) condition was imposed on them. But if a condition was imposed on them that they pay more than a tenth when entering, it must be taken from them. The Shāfiʿī said: if this condition was imposed upon them, i.e., the tenth, it is permissible to take it even if it was not conditioned at the outset. They disagreed regarding a *dhimmī* (resident of a Muslim country), if he brought merchandise from a (Christian) country; Mālik said: the *ʿushr* should be taken from the *dhimmī* if he came with merchandise, even if he enters a number of times a year. The Shāfiʿī said: it should not be taken from him unless it was a prior condition, and if they did not so condition it, it should not be taken. Abū Ḥanīfa and Aḥmad said: half of a tenth should be taken from the *dhimmī*; and Abū Ḥanīfa and Aḥmad relied in this matter on the principle that Abū Ḥanīfa formulated: the *ḥarbī* is obliged to pay five dinars and the *dhimmī* ten dinars (apparently, it should be vice versa).

The above is a more or less a clear summary of the ideas of the founders of Muslim jurisprudence, as it developed at the time of the Abbasids. All four legal scholars mentioned there—Abū Ḥanīfa, Mālik, the Shāfiʿī, and Ibn Ḥanbal—lived and flourished in the first century of Abbasid rule.

During the time of the first Abbasids we also find a developed view regarding the *dhimmīs*' land tax, as recorded by Abū Yūsuf in his book on the *kharāj*. The system was that of the *muqāsama*, i.e., the tax on produce, not on land size, but there was also the choice between this and the other system, that of the *misāḥa*. The tax on wheat and barley would be 40% of the crop, if it was irrigated land watered by canals, by gravitation, *sayḥ*. If watered by pumping, *dawālī*, the tax would be 30%; on date groves, vines, vegetables and other plantations, the tax would be 33%; on summer crops—25%. After payment of these sums no other tax, such as on marketing, should be charged, therefore the worth of the produce should be fairly estimated. One of the two methods should be used (meaning: a set tax according to land size, or a tax such as the above on produce), as is better for those paying the *kharāj*. Other changes in taxation were recorded in al-Wāthiq's time, in 322, AD 846/7, when goods transported by ship were exempted from the *ʿushr*, and in al-Mutawakkil's time, 245, AD 859/60, when the *nayrūz*, the New Year (for farmers) was postponed to 17 July,

which made it much easier for the protected people who paid the *kharāj*; I have already mentioned this (above, sec. 72).

Collecting taxes from the protected people was usually carried out on an individual basis; especially for urban areas there is no reason for assuming that tax collection in the Muslim countries was based on lump collection by the communities. This is what is implied by the responsum of Sheshnā, gaon of Sura (second half of the seventh century, a generation after the Arab conquest) dealing with the validity of a ban enforced on the community by the tax collectors to compel someone to pay his taxes. The gaon ruled that a vow made to the rulers or their messengers, the tax collectors, regarding taxes is forbidden; from this we learn that each individual was required to pay the tax himself. Nevertheless, as we find in other times and places as well, there were special levies, large sums of money, that the regime—whether central or local—levied on the community in times of war, and whenever there was a real or imagined emergency. In such cases, the community certainly apportioned the required sum among its people, by a standard set according to the circumstances. Yet the scholars, based on an early *halākhā*, were exempted from this obligation, as Naḥshōn Gaon states in his responsum: "This is my opinion: although the king and his ministers impose illegal tolls, press and encumber the community, it is still forbidden to exact anything from the rabbis". Also, the community was not supposed to cooperate with the authorities in acts of coercion against tax evaders, such as the ban on "making an oath either to the government or the tax collector"; if pressured, the community would declare a ban, but only as a make-believe, and "one should not turn over a Jew or his money to a robber and pillager".

A tax evasion that became well-known, and was mentioned in many sources and even dealt with in a number of modern studies, was about those who claimed Khaybar origins and a tax exemption granted by the Prophet himself. Various versions of the writ of exemption, forged, of course, have been preserved in copies in Hebrew script. Sometimes the Muslim rulers accepted the argument of the Jews who said that they were Khaybaris, but no instance of such an agreement on the part of the Abbasid regime is known.

A very unclear issue is that of the essential differences between the status of places peacefully taken over, by a capitulation agreement and without fighting (*ṣulḥ*), and those places vanquished by the sword (*ʿunwa*). It appears that sometimes the local rulers used the pretext of *ʿunwa*, in order to infringe the rights of the protected people, especially regarding their houses of prayer, and their economic situation as well, by levying taxes higher than the accepted rate. Characteristic of this is the affair concerning the people of Mosul, who complained about the unjustness of the local *qāḍī*. Patriarch Dionysius of Tel Mahrē, met with Caliph al-Ma'mūn over the issue; Dionysius recorded the session in his chronicle. He asked al-Ma'mūn to agree to receive a delegation of people from Mosul. According to him, the city had been conquered by *ṣulḥ*, nevertheless, the *qāḍī* ill-treats their great church, by ceasing the validity of the laws of the protected people, regarding the church and regarding the city's Christians, in general. Al-Ma'mūn ordered that the matter be looked into, i.e., whether Mosul had

indeed submitted by *ṣulḥ*; if that was indeed the case, the Christians there had to be treated according to the laws of the *dhimma*.¹⁷³

3. Relations between Jews and Christians

(174) There are no reliable and consistent sources regarding this issue. The literary sources mainly preserved the stories of the regime's persecution of the Christians, yet the information they purvey about day to day life, is very sparse. The reality may have been one of coexistence, in peace and cooperation, especially in the economic sphere. Yet aside from coexistence, hovering over the Church and its institutions is a spirit of Jew hatred—even when it could not be translated into acts of injustice and persecution, as in the Christian countries. The Church literature in the Syriac language usually referred to the Jews as 'the crucifiers'; I have already written about it in the chapter on the Arab conquest (above, sec. 59). The Church's laws, as they developed in the pre-Islamic period, emphasized again and again the ban on befriending Jews, and having anything to do with them in any and all ways; these laws were still valid, and formulated anew again and again, also in the Muslim period—such as Yīshū^cbarnūn's instructions that I have discussed above, in the first half of the ninth century, admonishing against friendship with the *bar zāqōfā*, 'the crucifier', i.e., the Jews (above, sec. 59-60).

¹⁷³ See Ibn Hubayra (MS BL Or 101), fol. 98. Abū Yūsuf, 59; *al-ʿUyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq* (De Goeje), 359, with a note of the fact that in al-Ma'mūn's time the tax was reduced from 50% to 40%, and it appears that he means wheat and barley, as we found in Abū Yūsuf. Likewise, in Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VI, 358: in AH 204, which is 819/20; cf. the discussion on the tax reforms instituted by the first of the Abbasid caliphs, in Kremer, *Kultur*., 276ff. Ibn Miqtāḡā, *al-Fakhri*, 246f., ascribes the renewal of the tax collection system by harvest (the *ṭiqāsama*) to the time of al-Mahdī, to the (Jewish) vizier Mu'āwiya b. Yāshār (c. 780). Cf. Løkkegaard, *Isl. Tax.*, 108-125; the time of al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 35, 89. Sheshnā Gaon: *Resp. Sha'arē tesh.*, no. 195; *Resp. Coronei*, 3b (no. 26, a version which is similar and more detailed); *Resp. Ge'ōnē mizr. ū-ma'ar.*, 40b (no. 165)—where collection by the community is mentioned: "the members of the entire community, including the owners of the (farms in the) villages, took it upon themselves to include the payment on all the villages, and levy the tax on each and every village according to the size of its fields, and also to equally divide the bribes necessary in order to remove the compulsion from upon themselves". The view that it is the community that collected the taxes has been expressed by a number of students: see Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 131, who believed that it is the exilarch who was the one responsible for the *jizya* and *kharaj* payments: *Er ... zog die Steuern von den Gemeinden ein*; it appears that Assaf also had a similar view: *Teq. ha-g.*, 19; Mann had already related to the facts as they should be understood from the sources, see: *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 123ff. The responsum of Naḥshōn Gaon: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 264 (no. 537). The ban on cooperation: *Resp. Coronei*, 3b, 5a (nos. 26, 40); the responsum, in parallel versions, is ascribed to Sheshnā Gaon, see Müller, *Maḥteah*, 31, in the note. On the Khaybaris, see the discussion: Gil, *History*, 152f., and there, in note 201, references to the sources. The text of Ibn Qudāma (writing at ca. 1200) may be added, *al-Mughnī*, IX, 363, with a total denial of this claim, asserted by "some of the protected people"; also see Noth's discussion in the context of a general discussion of the agreements between the Muslim rulers and the protected people, *Festschr. B. Spuler*, 294f., with additional references; also see Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS Paris 1506, 130b: the person who discovered the fraud perpetrated by those Jews was al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī (i.e., Aḥmad b. ʿAlī, author of *Ta'rikh Baghdād*). The Mosul affair: Michael the Syrian, 520 (transl. III, 69f.); this occurred at the beginning of the year 829.

Statements of disapproval and warning against associating with Jews have been preserved from the Nestorian council that convened in 676, i.e., a generation after the Arab conquest, headed by Patriarch Mar Gorgis. They complain there about "the Christian men" who, after the festive church service, rush to the Jews' inns to drink wine, even though they could drink wine in the Christian-owned inns of which there is no scarcity. The local bishop must punish such a person with a sentence issued by the Church. Anyone who contributed lighting oil or a candle to the idol-worshippers' and Jews' houses of prayer must be ostracized. A Christian woman is forbidden from marrying a non-Christian, so that she not be enticed towards idol-worship or Judaism. The "believers holding the body of the messiah and his blood" should not associate with Jews, should not eat with them, show them too much love or share their secrets with them; any transgressor is to be banned for associating with the Christ-killers. A ban will be placed on any Christian (Nestorian), whether layman or a church employee, who enters into and prays with a group of Jews or 'dissenters' (apparently meaning Monophysites). It is forbidden to talk to a Jew or an idol-worshipper before entering to participate in the church service. These statements usually are confirmation of the Church regulations from the pre-Islamic period, and their like may be found in the Byzantine law books. Here there was no change over the generations.

No less did eastern Christianity cultivate traditions regarding Jews who discovered the divine truth and joined the ranks of the Church. The classical story, which I have already mentioned (above, sec. 44), was that concerning Asher b. Levi of Sinjār—a town about 150 kilometers west of Mosul—who discovered the truth as a youth; this happened in Sel. 701, AD 390—and he received the name of *ʿavdā de-meshihā* (servant of the messiah); his father murdered him because he converted, yet in the end, the father and the entire family became Christian. This story of ʿAbd al-Masīḥ was widespread, in both Syriac and Arabic versions. Michael the Syrian writes of many Jews who accepted (the truth) and became Christian; this refers to the mid-seventh century.

Stories similar to that told by Michael the Syrian about his own community (the Yaʿqūbites) are told by the Nestorian chronicler about the days of the patriarch (the *jāthaliq*) Ishūʿyahav (mid-seventh century). He baptized (أعمد) a group of Jews from al-Ḥadītha, after his deputy, a man by the name of Titus, formerly a Zoroastrian (*mājūsī*), defeated the Yaʿqūbites in a disputation and expelled them; many of them accepted the Nestorian faith, something which also motivated many Jews to convert. Towards the end of the fifth century, an event occurred, according to a Christian source, the affair of the abbot of the monastery, Bar Sahdē. He and his monks were under Persian pressure to change their faith. They were brought to Nisibis and in the end executed. Bar Sahdē was stoned to death and the monks were crucified. Before then they were held in the house of a Jew, and that Bar Sahdē managed to bring about the conversion to Christianity of the Jewish homeowner and his family. Such stories, when told as belonging to Muslim times, seem to be a forward projection of events of the pre-Islamic period; for the conversion of Jews to Christianity under Muslim rule was not very likely. It appears that the two Churches, the Yaʿqūbite and the Nestorian, were in competition, among other things also as regards such

success stories, and it is most unlikely that they harbor a core of historical truth. On the other hand, the contrary evidence preserved in the Geniza is undoubtedly true, of the conversion of Christians to Judaism, such as the story of Obadiah the Proselyte, for example, discussed below (sec. 247), and the case we read of in the letter of Hayy Gaon to Shemariah, about the proselyte, formerly a Christian, who asked to maintain some rules not based in *halākḥā*, in matters of inheritance, apparently. The gaon ruled this out, making an analogy between conversion to Judaism, a promise to God to keep Jewish law, and between the vow and its rules spoken of in the Torah (Deuteronomy chapter 23).

Having already mentioned disputations, we know of disputations between Jews and Christians also. Thus the disputation between the monk Shuḥḥālīshū^c (in Syriac; and in Arabic: سبّاح ليشوع) and the *ra's al-jālūt* (in other manuscripts: *ra's al-mathība*, by the name of Mūsā); the Jew lost and converted. The disputation took place in the city of Rayy (today's Teheran). There was also a disputation between John, bishop of Edessa (i.e., Urfa) and the Jew Finḥās, at the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, that took place in Raqqa in the caliph's presence. Christianity's justice is proved by a poison test; this had to do with a third Christian sect, the Malikīs. The Karaite writer Qirqisānī had a disputation with the bishop (*uskuf*) of ʿUkbarā, by the name of Yishūʿsakā(?), "one of their leading bishops" (of which denomination is not clear; apparently the Nestorians). The bishop argued that the House (the Temple) was already rebuilt once (Ezra 3), thus the prophet's vision (Isaiah 65:19) had already come to pass. The only response Qirqisānī could find was to totally refute Ezra, since some of his writings are based in lies.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Regarding the taverns: Chabot, *Synodikon*, 225, and see its translation, 489; similar details are found in Ibn al-Ṭayyib, I, 144; oil for lighting: *ibid.*, I, 5; ban on marrying non-Christians: *ibid.*, I, 37; ban on approaching: *ibid.*, I, 212; ban on prayer: *ibid.*, I, 5; ban on speech: *ibid.*, II, 95; the story of Asher b. Levi: Corluy, *AB*, 5:5, 1886; Peeters, *AB*, 44:27, 1926, the first, according to MS BL Add 12174, the other according to MS Vatican, Syriac no. 199, which contains the Arabic version on pages 72-91. See Michael the Syrian, IV, 435 (col. 3, bottom), and the translation, 453. The story of al-Ḥadītha: *Akhbār* (Scher), 153 (=473); Ḥadītha was apparently ancient Hatra, Ḥaḍra in Arabic, in the area of Mosul. See Dussaud, *Topogr.*, 498. See the story of Bar Saḥdē in Gero, *Barsauma*, 112f.; Uhlig, *OC*, 72 (1988), 68ff.; cf. the story of the Jew who was in the service of the Persian rulers and in charge of the prison in Bēt Lapat, and used his position for the Jews' benefit: BT *Taʿanūi*, 22a. Also see the story of the Jewish tailor in the city of Nineveh (i.e., Mosul) who was possessed by a demon; Rabbān bar ʿAdetā expelled the demon with the help of the sign of the cross; the entire family converted to Christianity, and the tailor became a monk; see Budge, *Histories*, I, 127 and the translation, *ibid.*, II, 261. Hage, *Syr.-jakob. Kirche*, 87, accepts the above story of Michael the Syrian; on the other hand, see Scher's reservations (above, this note) regarding the time of the Ḥadītha story above, in his note: Titus became bishop when appointed by Patriarch Ezekiel (570-581); this discrepancy totally invalidates the reliability of the story, or may have a kernel of truth, but it anyway belongs to the pre-Islamic period. Hayy Gaon's letter: 61, a, lines 17ff. Shuḥḥālīshū^c: Troupeau, *Catalogue*, I, 172; (no. 204[1], and no. 3); Graf, *GCAL*, II, 207. The dispute in Edessa: Graf, *ibid.*, 25; Qirqisānī's dispute, see *Anwār*, 220.

4. Jewish personalities in Umayyad times

(175) In 651/2, the last Persian king, Yazdigird, was murdered, thus putting an end to Sasanid rule. The caliph at the time was °Uthmān b. °Affān, who himself would be murdered some years later, on 17 June 656. We have no knowledge of Babylonian Jewry matters at that time, except for the exilarch Bustanai and his descendants, whom I have discussed above. The gaon of Sura was then Rav Ḥananiah (Ḥīnenai), while in Pumbedita his contemporaries were HUNĀ and RAVĀ, and after him "our Lord and Master Isaac", who according to Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, was in Fīrūz Shābūr (i.e., either in Pumbedita or Neharde'a) when it was conquered by °Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib"; It should be noted that in the more reliable versions of Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, R. Isaac is not referred to as gaon. One of the caliph's retainers was the Yemenite Jew, ABŪ ḤAFṢA YAZĪD al-Yammānī. He was a Jewish physician captured by a Bedouin along with his wife and his son, Yaḥyā (apparently when the Muslims were taking over the southern part of the Arabian peninsula). Abū Ḥafṣa befriended Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, later to become caliph, who paid the ransom for the family and liberated them. From here on he was in the company of the Umayyad house, the main supporters of °Uthmān. He later converted to Islam, and was together with Marwān in Caliph °Uthmān's house when the latter was murdered. Abū Ḥafṣa's great grandson, MARWĀN B. SULAYMĀN, was a well-known poet during the time of the first Abbasid caliphs, until the time of Harūn al-Rashīd. His cousin, AL-MU'AMMAL B. JAMĪL, was a poet in the days of al-Mahdī. He arrived in Baghdad from al-Madīna and settled there. Marwān b. Sulaymān's grandson was MARWĀN B. ABĪ'L-JANŪB, also a poet, in the days of al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil.

Another Jewish *mawlā* of °Uthmān's was ḤUMRĀN B. ABBĀ (Abān) b. KHĀLID (°Abd °Amr), known as Abū Zayd. The Muslim army captured him during the conquest of Babylonia. He was then known as Ṭuwayd, and was one of four boys forcefully held by the Christians in the church at °Ayn Tamr in order to teach them Christianity. °Uthmān bought him and then freed him and appointed him his secretary (*kātib*); but some time later he became angry with him because he divulged some secret, dismissed him from his post and sent him away, to be governor of Baṣra. During the time of the revolt of the Banū al-Zubayr brothers, Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr called him "the son of the Jewess" and reminded him that he had been a captive, and that he was an *'ilj nabaḥ*, which is something that one should understand as not an Arab, but a speaker of Aramaic. When Muṣ'ab was killed (April 692) and the Umayyads returned and seized Baṣra, Ḥumrān was returned as its ruler. Al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf complained about him to Caliph °Abd al-Malik, he even struck him and fined him 100,000 dirhams. °Abd al-Malik wrote him: "Ḥumrān is a brother of those who died and an uncle to those who are alive, therefore you must provide him with good protection, and therefore return his money". He married an Arab woman of the Banū Sa'd, and also married his son to an Arab girl. °Abd al-Malik later dismissed him from his post, but granted him a *qaḥḥa*, apparently: an agricultural area where he should collect its taxes for a living, in °Abbadān. It appears that the affairs of these few Jews who won a place in the writings of Arab chroniclers, are only a small part of a much more comprehensive

process of integrating Jews (and Christians and Zoroastrians) in the administration of the young Muslim empire, by granting tribal protection (usually following capture) and demanding religious conversion.

It should be noted that in this period another person of ascribed Jewish origin flourished, the one considered the central figure among the followers of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib—ʿABDALLAH B. SABBĀ. He was chief propagandist of the ʿAlī camp and agitated for a war against Caliph ʿUthmān and his circle. ʿAbdallah b. Sabbā embarked upon a process of ʿAlī adoration, arguing that ʿAlī, in relation to Muḥammad, was like Joshua b. Nun in relation to Moses. After ʿAlī's murder he denied his death, attributed a divine status to him, and fostered the belief in the *raǧʿa*, i.e., his return to the believers. Even the Shiites of those generations considered ʿAbdallah b. Sabbā to be one of the *ghulāh* (plural of *ghālī*, an uncompromising extremist). It was said of him that he was a Yemenite Jew, also known as Ibn al-Sawdā, i.e., "son of the black woman".¹⁷⁵

(176) I have already mentioned (above, secs. 51-52) the Jews' meeting with ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib. This occurred during the great Muslim civil war, when the Umayyad supporters rose up against the fourth caliph, ʿAlī. According to Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, 90,000 Jews went forth to meet ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib when he visited Fīrūz Shābūr (Nehardeʿa, later called al-Anbār by the Arabs). It is not possible to know whether that mass reception indeed derived from a true identification of the masses of Babylonian Jews with ʿAlī's side, or from the fact that he was then the recognized caliph, and in all events, he had a strong hold in the eastern part of the caliphate. This took place at about 658, and, according to Sherira Gaon, RAV ISAAC was at the head of the Jews who gathered to meet ʿAlī; it may be that Isaac was then gaon in Pumbedita, though at about the same time we find the name of R. Būsai, or Bustanai, as its gaon. According to contemporary Syriac

¹⁷⁵ Hananiah, Hūnā, Rāvā, see Sherira, *Letter*, 101, 106; then we find the information about the law of the rebellious woman, ascribed to Rāvā in the *Letter* and in a responsum cited in the *ʿIṣṣūr* to Rāvā and Hūnā, in the year Sel. 962, i.e. 650-651, see Lewin's notes, e, f, in the *Letter*. As I have already noted above, the rebellious woman law was instituted, according to a tradition ascribed to Naḥshōn gaon (ca. 875), in "about 300 years or more from today", as quoted by Sherira Gaon. If Sherira Gaon did say these things at about 970, they indeed suit the beginning of Muslim rule in Babylonia, when Jewish women, he says, began "addressing the gentiles" in this matter. See *Ōṣar ha-g. to Ketubbōt*, 192. Abū Ḥafsa and his descendants, see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 3001; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī, *Ta'rikh*, XIII, 142f., 153, 180. Marwān b. Sulaymān lived in Yamāma, from where he came to Baghdad. Another version in al-Khaṭīb claims that Abū Ḥafsa was a *mawlā* of the poet Samawāl b. ʿĀḍīʾā and was captured in Iṣṭakhr, in Persia, while still a youth. This is a less credible version, which was apparently the claim of the descendants, when they sought to hide their Jewish descent and claimed that they were the offspring of the Iṣṭakhr captives; as to Samawāl, it was indeed said that he was a Jew, see Iṣḥāhānī, IX, 36. Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 34, relates Abū Ḥafsa to Khurāsān, as did Zand, *Pe'amim*, 35 (1987/8), 11; Ḥumrān: Ibn Saʿd, VII (1), 108; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 247, 368; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2064, 2122; II, 801, 817f., 837. Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 435. Cf. Morony, *Iraq*, 227f. On ʿAbdallah Ibn Sabbā, see Friedländer's comprehensive article: *ZA*, 23:296, 1910; 24:1, 1911, whose discussion spreads far and wide, even mentioning the Falashas, regarding the mother, al-Sawdā, "the black one", of his hero. Also cf. the entry ʿAbd Allāh b. Sabā, in *IEJ*² (by Hodgson). Also see al-Kashshī, 98ff., who adds: "it is not for nothing that the Shiites' rivals say that the source of their faith is taken from the Jews"; Malaṭī, 18: ʿAbdallah says to ʿAlī: you are you (i.e., you are God). ʿAlī asked him: and who am I? They said to him: You are the Creator. His disciples said that ʿAlī had not died, but was in the midst of a pure white cloud; there are those who say that he is dead, but will be sent before the resurrection and fight the *dajjāl*.

Christian chronicles, this was the time when there actually were acts of conversion to Christianity among the Jews (above, sec. 174). It appears that there was some confusion regarding the time of these acts.

Evidence of the new regime's need of the Jews' knowledge and experience in economic and money matters can be seen in the coins (dirhams) then minted in Baṣra with Hebrew lettering. They were coined at the order of the governor, ʿAbdallah b. Ziyād and bear his name: "ʿUbiʾālā b Zīdām"(?). The dates on the coins ranged from the year 56 to the year 68, i.e., AD 675/6 to 687/8. The Jews' economic status at the time is reflected in the act of a wealthy Baṣra Jew, who was also learned in literature and the sciences, who bequeathed all of his property to scholars and left nothing to his only son.¹⁷⁶

(177) As to the Jewish leadership, we are floundering in the dark in this period, and only have the names of some of the exilarchs (as I have already shown above, secs. 75-78) and the geonim of Sura and Pumbedita. At about 670, the gaon in Sura was SHESHNĀ, and the gaon in Pumbedita at the same time (or perhaps closer to 680) was HŪNĀ B. JOSEPH. A responsum regarding atonement roosters is ascribed to "our Lord and to Master Sheshnā Gaon", and it may be that it is he who was that early gaon; yet it may be that Sheshnā, ʿAmram Gaon's father is meant, but the latter's name is not included in Sherira Gaon's list of geonim. The real name of this early Sheshnā was Mesharshayā b. Taḥlīfā, as inscribed in his seal.

Further down, we find in Sura ḤANANIAH HA-KOHEN OF NAHR PĀQŌD, gaon from 689 to 694. After him was the gaon HILLAI (in one version: Nahīlai) ha-Levi of Narash, 694 to 712, followed by JACOB HA-KOHEN OF NAHR PĀQŌD, 712-730.¹⁷⁷

(178) At about the year 700, the gaon in Pumbedita was ḤIYYĀ OF MĒSHĀN; after him there was RABYĀ MŌRŌNAI, about 710; NAṬRŪNAI B. NEHEMIAH, who was MAR YANQĀ, was gaon after him, from 719. Of him Sherira Gaon says that he was an in-law of the exilarchic house, and persecuted the people of the yeshiva to the extent that some of them were forced to flee to Sura, staying there until Naṭrūnai's death; I have already

¹⁷⁶ See Sherira, *Letter*, 101, 102. Conversion to Christianity, see Michael the Syrian, IV, 435 (text), II (translation), 453; see *Akhbār* (Scher), 153, with the editor correctly noting there that it was an error: the Persian period (AD 570-581) was meant, the time of Bishop Titus, who was appointed by Patriarch Ezekiel, and not by ʾIshū'yhav, as is in the chronicle. Rav Busai (Bustanai): Sherira, *Letter*, 102. The coins: see *Katalog* (Berlin), 30, nos. 101-106; the wealthy Jew: Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn*, I, 344; cf. Pellat, *Le milieu*, 234; Gil, *Documents*, 23 n. 30.

¹⁷⁷ Sheshnā Gaon, Hūnā Gaon, see Sherira, *Letter*, 102: '(the Head) in Sura was our Lord and Master Sheshnā, on whose seal it was inscribed: Mesharshayā b. Taḥlīfā. (As to the name Sheshnā: possibly the pronunciation was Sesōnā ['joy'].) Sheshnā's responsum: *Ōṣar ha-g. to Yōmā*, no. 216 (regarding roosters for Yom Kippur). Hananiah ha-Kohen: Sherira, *Letter*, 106; Ibn Da'ūd, the *Book of Tradition*, 36, who considers Hūnā b. Joseph gaon of Sura and Hananiah (Hīnenā) ha-Kohen gaon of Pumbedita, who according to him served in the gaonate for eight years (until 697); but some versions have: five years. Hillai ha-Levi, Jacob ha-Kohen: Sherira, *Letter*, 106; the *Book of Tradition*, 36: 18 years, until 715. Mann has already shown that in this period, mentioned in Sherira's *Letter*, and also in geonic responsa, there are Babylonian localities known from the Talmud as well, which is proof for their continuity over hundreds of years; mentioned are geonim who came from Nahr Pāqōd, Mēshān, Shabhā, Narash, Shilhā (which is close to Sura, see BT, *Bāvā batrā*, 172a: close to the locality of Rav Hūnā, who was a Suran), known in the geonic sources as Shilhī, or Shlīf; see Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 463f.

mentioned this (above, sec. 99). About the year 730, the gaon in Pumbedita was Judah, about whom there are no details.

At about this time we begin to hear about the beginning of the activities of the Jewish sects, of Abū ʿĪsā al-Īṣfahānī and the 'messiah' Serini of Mardīn. The years 717-720 were the years of the reign of ʿUmar II, Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, who issued new edicts against the protected people, and was considered pious and righteous because in all spheres he abided by Muslim law; there is no doubt that there were many instances of distress then caused by the regime to the Jewish communities in the Islamic empire. Something of this distress might be preserved in the information regarding the conversion to Islam of the Jews of Hīra at this time. From this period we also have the earliest evidence regarding the international commercial activities of the Jewish merchants (the Rādhānites), in a fragment of a commercial letter of 713, written in Judeo-Persian, that was discovered in western China (below, sec. 350). Evidence of this activity are also Persian inscriptions in Hebrew script from 753. This activity apparently continued undisturbed, while in the northern area of the caliphate there were acts of oppression and persecution tied to the dismissal of the Jewish governor, ʿAqīvā, that I mentioned earlier (above, sec. 166).¹⁷⁸

(179) Despite the edicts and the persecution of the protected people, it is clear that the Jews in the areas bordering Byzantine rule still preferred the Muslims. A chronicle ascribed to Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē, under the year 1040, i.e., AD 729, states that in that year the Jews of Neo-Caesarea, i.e., Caesarea of Cappadocia in Asia Minor, turned the city over to the Muslim commander, Maslama.

In that period we find details about some Jews who held an important place in the spiritual and scientific life of Muslim society. First among them was MĀSARJAWAYH, and after him, his son ʿĪSĀ. According to Ibn al-Qifṭī, Māsarjawayh was from Baṣra, a Jew, who engaged in medicine at the time of ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Some say his correct name was Māsarjīs. As ordered by Caliph Marwān (b. al-Ḥakam, apparently), he translated the book on medicine by the Syrian priest (*al-qiss*) Aaron b. Aʿyūn, because Māsarjawayh was an Aramaic (*suryānī*) speaking Jew. Caliph ʿUmar Ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, found the book in "the books storehouse" and ordered its propagation. He also wrote books about various foods, about the eye, and about medicinal herbs. His son, ʿĪsā, continued in his father's profession and wrote a book about colors. Māsarjawayh was the first Jewish man of

¹⁷⁸ Ḥiyyā of Mēshān: Sherira, *Letter*, 102; Ibn Daʿūd, the *Book of Trad.*, 36, where he is said to have been gaon of Sura. Rabiyyā: Sherira, *ibid.*; Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah: *ibid.*; Ibn Daʿūd finds Yanqā in Sura, and knows that his real name was Rabbā b. Naṭrūnai, and his time—as said above, from 719. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 54, concludes from the text of Sherira Gaon in his *Letter*, what is not there, because he believed that the Sura yeshiva, unlike the Pumbedita yeshiva, was recognized by the Muslim authorities, until that famous order was issued by al-Maʾmūn (above, sec. 80), and from then on, the government could no longer mistreat Pumbedita. In his opinion, this is the explanation for the fact that in this earlier period, people of the Diaspora tended to send queries to the geonim of Sura, more so than to the geonim of Pumbedita. Cf. what I wrote about the ties of the yeshivot with the diasporas (above, secs. 103, 114). Judah: Sherira, *Letter*, 103; Ibn Daʿūd, *Book of Trad.*, 36; Abraham Ibn Daʿūd has him the gaon of Sura. The conversion to Islam in Hīra: Abū Yūsuf, 202; cf. Morony, *Iraq*, 308, with more references. See on the letter fragment and the inscriptions: Margoliouth, *JRAS*, 1903, 735-761; Henning, *BSOAS*, 20 (1957), 335-342; Utas, *Orientalia Suecana*, 17 (1968), 123ff.

erudition who used Arabic, and the first of the translators to Arabic from Syriac, and perhaps also from Greek (Aaron, whose book he translated, wrote in Greek, and was from Alexandria, where he wrote his book *Pandekta* [in Arabic: *Kunnāsh*]), in the first quarter of the seventh century. It may be that Māsarjawayh translated it from the Syriac translation and not from the original Greek; the Syriac translation is ascribed to a certain Gessius. Māsarjawayh's writings have not been preserved.

At that time it was learned of the death of one of the descendants of the Yathrib—al-Madīna—Jewish residents, YŪSUF B. ʿABDALLAH B. SALĀM AL-ISRĀʿĪLĪ. His father, ʿAbdallah b. Salām, according to Muslim tradition, was the first among (the few) converts to Islam among the Jews of al-Madīna. He converted immediately after Muḥammad's arrival in the city at the time of the *hijra*, when he fled his city Makka. It was the Prophet, according to tradition, who named ʿAbdallah's son Yūsuf; he even sat him down in his room and stroked his head. Yūsuf transmitted traditions (*ḥadīth*) in the name of his grandmother, Umm Maʿqil.

A contemporary, who continued flourishing also under the Abbasids, was the Jew MĀ SHĀ ALLAH IBN ATHARĪ, originally of Baṣra. Ibn al-Nadīm explains that his name was Mīsha (Moses, Menashe?) and that the name Atharī was derived from Jethro; yet there are those who write the name of his father: Abrā (Abraham?). He flourished in the time of al-Manṣūr, and continued in the days of al-Ma'mūn. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, he was singular in his time in his area of science. Among other things, he wrote the great book of the conjunctions, that contained fourteen books; the twenty-first (?) book regarding associations, religions and sects; the book of the projection of the rays; the book of meanings; the book of making astrolabes and their use; a book on the characteristics of the ball; the book of the rains and winds; the book of two parts; the book known (by the name of the) twenty-seventh; the first book, on the beginning of the professions; the second book, about escaping fate; the third book, about the questions; the fourth book, on observing the stars; the fifth book, on events; the sixth book, on the movement of the two lights (the 'large ones', the sun and the moon) and their meaning; the book of the letters; the book of government; the book of the moon's aura before it shines (or: before the shining of the sun and the appearance of Sirius); the book of prices (price fluctuation according to the movement of the stars); the book of the turn of the year according to the conjunctions; the book of governments and sects; the book of the regularity of the conjunctions of the stars and their alignment in relation to each other; the book of illnesses; the book of the constellations and their laws. Some say he was originally from Egypt, but this seems to be the result of a corruption in the text, *Miṣrī* (Egyptian), instead of *Baṣrī* (from Baṣra). At the time of Baghdad's founding (762) he was in charge of the measurements along with the Persian Nawbakht, and together they set the opportune time to found the city according to the stars to be 30 July 762. About six of his books are preserved in the original, and many are preserved in Latin translation. His works show the influence of Persian sources, and in general, it appears that he favored the Persians, and by astrological calculations concluded that the caliphate would fall in 815. Abraham Ibn Ezra translated into Hebrew his book on solar eclipses,

"About darkening of the moon and the sun and the conjunctions of the stars and the cycles of the years".¹⁷⁹

5. *In the early days of Abbasid rule*

(180) In the mid eighth century, SIMEON QAYYĀRA (a *qayyāra* is someone who produces or deals with wax, candles, or asphalt), the author of the book of *halākhōt gedōlōt*, flourished. The only information we have about him is in two sources that mention when the book was written. The apparently earlier source is included in the *mishnā* commentary ascribed to

¹⁷⁹ Neocaesarea: the chronicle ascribed to Dionysius, 29f., and see it also in the article: Chabot, *REJ*, 28 (1894), 291; Māsarjawayh: Ibn al-Nadīm, 297; see *ibid.*, II, 142; Ibn al-Qiftī, 247, 324; Ibn Abī Ūṣaybi'a, 232; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ*, XIV, 231, cites the text about Abū Muḥammad Yahyā b. Muḥammad b. Ṣā'id b. Kātib; Kātib was al-Manṣūr's *mawlā*; Abū Muḥammad Yahyā was the pupil of Māsarjawayh's grandson, al-Ḥasan b. 'Isā, in 853, and it appears that he was also a descendant of a converted Jewish family. About Māsarjawayh cf. also: Steinschneider, *ZDMG*, 20 (1866), 431; Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 49 (1905), 43f.; Meyerhof, *Isis*, 28 (1938), 435ff.; Sezgin, *GAS*, III, 43f.; Ullmann, *Med. in Isl.*, 23; Ullmann assumed that Māsarjawayh flourished at the end of the eighth century or the beginning of the ninth, and it appears that he confused him with his son, 'Isā. Yūsuf b. 'Abdallah: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *MS Paris 6132*, 41a: he died in the year 100 (which began on 3 August 718). Zand, *Pe'amim*, 35 (1987/8), 9, raises the possibility that also one of the great early Islamic legalists, Abū Ḥanīfa, whose name was al-Nu'mān b. Thābit b. Zūṭā, was a descendant of Jews, seen from the name of his grandfather, Zūṭā. This was a silk merchants' family. However, there is no factual basis for this opinion in the sources. According to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'riḫ*, XIII, 324ff., his father was a Christian, some say he was a *nabaṭī*, i.e., an Aramaic speaker; he has different traditions regarding the place where the family originated; also see Ibn Khallikān, V, 405f.: Zūṭā was taken captive when the Muslims conquered Kābil, in Khurāsān (664). See the article Abū Ḥanīfa in *Et*² (by J. Schacht), *Mā shā Allah*; Ibn al-Nadīm, 273; Ibn al-Qiftī, 327; Bar Hebraeus, *Ta'riḫ*, 237; 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbūt*, I, 74; Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt*, 123: The disputation of Mā Shā Allah and Sufyān al-Thawrī (in Baṣra, in the year 161, i.e., 778; Ḥasan al-Sandūbī, the editor, *ibid.*, note 2, spells his father's name [Atharī]: Īrī); cf. Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 15f., 20-23, with details about the Latin translations; the book about solar eclipses was translated by the Sevillian Johannes Hispalensis, from Ibn Ezra's Hebrew translation: *Epistola de rebus eclipsium et de coniunctionibus planetarum* in (according to the Hebrew, it should have been *et*) *revolutionibus annorum mundi*, in 12 chapters, first published in Venice in 1493 and again in Nürenberg in 1549; see on Ibn Ezra's translations, *ha-she'elōt* and *ha-qadrūt*, from before 1148: Levy, *Astrol. Works*, 11f. *Ha-qadrūt* was published by Grossberg, in 1902: *Sefer le-mashālla be-qadrūt*, from MS Bodl 2023, 14 pages, as a supplement to *Sefer yesirā*. Gunther, *Early Science*, 133ff., presents an English translation of the work on the astrolabe, and the Latin translation, with a photograph of the Latin manuscript. Levi Della Vida, *RSO*, 14 (1934), 270ff., surveyed what was known about him and published his essay on the rains, from MS Barberini 46; also see Poznanski's survey: *MGWJ*, 49 (1905), 45. M. Krause describes a book of 75 chapters of Mā Shā Allah, the title of which has not been preserved, as well as 85 articles from his Book of Articles, all being astrological essays, manuscripts in Istanbul. He published the first of them; see *Quellen und Studien* Abt. B, 3 (1936), 444ff. Goldstein, *Physis* (1964), 205ff., discusses the Eclipses essay; Thorndike, *Osiris*, 12 (1956), 49ff., deals with the Latin translations of the astrological essays of Mā Shā Allah in much greater detail than Steinschneider (above) 54 years earlier. Cf. also Miquel, *Géographie*, 109; Pingree, *Essays*, 5ff., mainly deals with the Persian and Syriac sources which influenced his books. Kennedy, *Astrol. Hist.*, 39-68, published an English translation of a fragment from his book on the new moons, as was preserved in the Christian astrologer, Ibn Habantā (Baghdad, 9th century), a manuscript found in Munich; also see there the facsimile of the fragment, on pp. 1-38; further along he discusses the translations of his books. Also see: Morony, *Iraq*, 339 and the article Masha' Allah in *Et*² (by J. Samsó).

Nathan Av (i.e., Nathan b. Abraham, who was chief judge of the Court of the Palestinian yeshiva at the end of the first half of the eleventh century); according to him, after Yehudai Gaon "who was in Baghdad at the beginning of Arab rule", and who wrote the *halākhōt pesūkōt*, "there was R. Simeon Qayyāra, who wrote the *halākhōt gedōlōt*" in Sel. 1043, i.e., AD 743; Yehudai Gaon, as we shall see below, was gaon about fifteen years later. The other source is Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Tradition*, which states that Simeon Qayyāra flourished in the days of Samuel b. Marī (Pumbedita gaon from 748), and wrote his book "in Sel. 1052", AD 741. Abraham Ibn Da'ūd also states that Simeon Qayyāra mentions in his book "traditions ascribed to Kohen Šedeq; but we have not heard that in his time there was a gaon by the name of Kohen Šedeq. It is possible that this Kohen Šedeq who was his master was a scholar who was not appointed [gaon]".

We are now in the period of the great Muslim civil wars, hostilities that eventually led to the ousting of the Damascene Umayyad dynasty and the rise of the Abbasids. We have seen (above, sec. 78) the estimated influence of the change of rule on the exilarchs and their office. The center of government was now transferred to Babylonia, and its capital was first al-Anbār, i.e., Neharde'a, near Pumbedita, in other words at the very heart of the considerable Jewish population. Baghdad, the capital founded in 762, was on the Tigris, in the center of the Rādhān area, Gūkhā in the talmudic sources, about which I shall elaborate (below, sec. 352).

In the cultural sphere, it appears that making Baghdad the new capital, the center of Muslim rule, led to linguistic assimilation. The Jews of Babylonia, as is known, spoke Aramaic, and it should be assumed that the vernacular of the masses continued to be Aramaic. In a responsum, apparently of Sherira Gaon, in response to a query sent by the people of Qayrawān, in 992, the gaon defends the use of Aramaic, even in prayer. The petitioners based themselves on the statement of Rav, "a person shall never ask (in prayer) for his needs, in Aramaic", and on R. Yohanan, "anyone who asks about what he wants in the Aramaic language is not answered by the Angels of service" (BT, *Shabbāt* 12b), and the gaon responds at length, here is some of it: "...it still occurs (read: *mitremi* instead of *mitmeri*) in the yeshivot that people say in the Holy Language: guardians of the gates open the gates, so as the outcry of the oppressed Jews can be heard. Some say it in Aramaic. Could angels appointed on recording what people say, possibly not understand Aramaic? The earlier (scholars) had no reservations on it, so exactly do we not have any reservations on it". Gradually Arabic penetrated, writing, at first, then as the daily vernacular. Naturally, we have no detailed information about how this process proceeded. As Steinschneider noted, it was a speedy process, because the transition was from one Semitic language to another, thus Arabic was accepted among the Jews of Babylonia, quicker than it was in Spain, for example. The geonim continued to write in Aramaic, and sometimes in a Hebrew which arouses our admiration; yet when the queries were written in Arabic, they answered in that language: "We have instructed to write the response to the query in the language of the Hagarites, as it is written"; and a request in the queries: "we wish that when they arrive at the yeshiva they be shown him and read to him, and that he

instruct that the responsa on them be in the language of Ishmael as they are written". On the other hand: "As you asked us in Aramaic, we also—as is the custom of the scholars—instructed that the responsa to you be also" (in that language). There is interesting information about the peculiar accent of the Babylonian Jews, in Hebrew and in Aramaic: Qirqisānī notes that "many of the Jews of Iraq, since they lived among the Nabaṭ (Aramaic speakers), pronounce *qādōsh* as *qadēsh*", i.e., they pronounce the *hōlem* (o sound) like a *šērē* (ē sound), as it is still pronounced by Lithuanian and Yemenite Jews;¹⁸⁰ which could point to Babylonian origins of these two Jewish groups.

(181) In the year 730, the exilarch, Solomon b. Hisdai, appointed as gaon in Sura, SAMUEL, whose father's name is not known, but what was known was the much honored name of his grandfather, Rāvā, the gaon of Pumbedita, that I have mentioned above. Samuel was gaon, it should be assumed, until 748. To add honor to his family genealogy, it was said of him that he was a descendant of Amēmar (b. Yanqā, a scholar of the fifth century AD, who was executed by the Persians in 470; above, sec. 41); Sherira Gaon adds in his *Letter*, that the descendants of Amēmar, who were of the seed of this Samuel, gaon of Sura, resided in Pumbedita. The time gap between Amēmar and Samuel, about 300 years, should be noted. It appears that due to a scribal error of an early copier, details about the duration of Samuel's Sura gaonate were omitted. Rapoport suggested the following solution: twenty-eight years are missing to complete the one-hundred years of the Sura geonim listed by Sherira; therefore, the following should apparently be added: Samuel twenty-eight years. On the other hand, he writes, further down Sherira Gaon notes that Yehudai b. Naḥmān, and

¹⁸⁰ The commentary of Nathan Av, see Assaf, *Taq. ha-g.*, 297, and see Assaf's comments *ibid.*, 298; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 36f. It should be noted that Abraham Ibn Da'ūd thought that Samuel b. Marī was gaon in Sura, but (see below) he was gaon in Pumbedita. As to Kohen Šedeq, it should be borne in mind that the information regarding the names of the geonim and the personalities of the yeshivot is not complete, and it may be that one of the priestly geonim who served in Sura at that time is meant, such as Ḥananiah ha-Kohen or Jacob ha-Kohen or Marī ha-Kohen. Cf. also on *halākhōt gedōlōt* the article by Epstein, *ha-Goren*, 3:46, 1901/2; Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 263f.; Lewin, *Meivōt*, 133 note d.; see the article by Y. Horowitz in the *Hebrew Encycl.*, XIV (*Halākhōt gedōlōt*), and the new research material that he added in vol. II of the Encyclopedia's supplements. Prayers in Aramaic: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 188ff. (no. 373). See Steinschneider's series of articles, in *JQR*, 11-13 (1898-1901), where he dealt mainly with the Arabic names of Jews, see especially what he writes in vol. 12, *ibid.*, pp. 481f.; there he also cites examples of the penetration of the Arabic language into the *midrashim*, such as the "Alphabet of Ben-Sira", under the letter *taw*: *lā faqir afqar min ghani'in lā yashba'* "there is no poor person poorer than an insatiable wealthy person". See Mas'ūdī (Saadia Gaon's contemporary), *Tanbīh*, 77, who notes that the Jews of Iraq are speakers of Aramaic, the language of the *targūm*, in which they interpret the Bible, because it is clearer for them and also closer to Hebrew. One hundred years thereafter, Hayy Gaon still writes: "in Babylonia from the days of yore, the Aramaic language and the Chaldean language still subsist; in all the towns the Jews and gentiles converse in the Aramaic and Chaldean language(s); even in the cities founded by the Ishmaelites, most of the names are in modified Aramaic....", see his statements in Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam yesh.* = *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Nedārīm*, 90. The language of the responsa: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 187 (no. 310); Bodl. MS Heb f 21, f. 49; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 462f.; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 117. On the pronunciation see Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 140, and cf. Idelsohn, *MGWJ*, 57 (1913), 539; Goitein, *Lešōnēnū*, 3 (1929-1931), 361; Yalon, *Kiryat sefer* (1932-1934), 58 (only he noted the Lithuanians); Klar, *Meḥqārīm*, 327; also see on the geonim's Hebrew: Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1962), 165.

Davidai b. Naḥmān, two brothers, were geonim in the two yeshivot at the same time; from what is written there, one would conclude that Davidai served in Pumbedita in 761-767; to his mind this would be impossible if it was said that Yehudai was gaon only "three and a half years", as stated there, thus he suggests that the correct version should be "thirteen and a half years", i.e., that Yehudai Gaon served from 756 to 769, then only eighteen years remain for Samuel, grandson of Rāvā. All of this was done in order to complete the calculation of one hundred years, as said by Sherira in his *Letter*. Yet it is more logical to be less fastidious about Sherira Gaon and his one hundred years calculation for the Sura yeshiva, about which he knew less than about Pumbedita.

In a geonic responsum regarding the validation of deeds, there is the following passage: "...it was said that in the day of Solomon b. Ḥisdai this (rule of how to validate deeds) was formulated also at the *shūvta de-riḡlā* (the Sabbath gathering—above sec. 99) at the exilarch's place. We also read in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, that "(there was a gaon in Pumbedita) Master Abbā b. Master Rav Ami in the year 180 (AD 869) who was the son of Master Rav Samuel, whom the exilarch Solomon b. Ḥisdai appointed in Mātā Maḥsīya as I have explained above", i.e., this is the appointment that he mentioned—that the exilarch appointed Samuel as gaon of Sura. In the history of that time one should be attentive to four facts: Solomon b. Ḥisdai was the uncle (the brother of the father) of ʿAnan b. David; the details refer to the Sura yeshiva; the descendants of Izdādwar, Bustanai's Persian wife, were recognized; the head of the Sura yeshiva went to the *shūvta de-riḡlā* at the exilarch's. The succeeding geonim, especially the geonim of Pumbedita, including Sherira Gaon, would break free of the tie with the house of ʿAnan and the recognition of the descendants of the Persian woman; also, they would have something to say regarding the strong tie with, and subordination to, the exilarchic dynasty.

Following Samuel there was a gaon from a priestly family, MARĪ HA-KOHN OF NAHR PĀQŌD, the time of whose gaonate I estimate at 748-756. It may be assumed that he was the son of Ḥananiah ha-Kohen of Nahr Pāqōd, the Sura gaon (689-694). During his time R. Aḥa of Shabḥa went to Palestine, as I have mentioned before (above, sec. 78), and I have already noted that there is uncertainty regarding his identity. Aḥa, gaon of Sura, whose estimated time is 756, is mentioned at about the same time. A responsum is recalled (concerning washing hands) attributed to "the GAON Rav Aḥa of Shabḥa" and a responsum (regarding bar mitzvah) of "Rav Aḥa JUDGE of Shabḥa". Also mentioned is "MASTER SAMUEL *rōsh kallā*, the teacher of Rav Aḥa" (perhaps this should be: *berēh*, the son [of Rav Aḥa]; this, in a responsum regarding the blessing over perfumes). In all events, this is the time when Rav Aḥa wrote the *She'iltōt*.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Samuel, grandson of Rāvā, see Rapoport, *Tōledōt rabbēnu nātān*, 43f.; cf. Harkavy, *Resp.*, in the introduction, xxvi; 82 (no. 181), 357; also see *Ōsar ha-g.*, to *Ketubbōt*, 89 (no. 241). See Danzig, *Māvō*, 17, n. 5, who disputes Rapoport's correction, according to which Yehudai Gaon served 13-and one half years. In Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 36: he was gaon in Pumbedita and died in 753. Marī ha-Kohen (b. Hananiah?), see Sherira, *Letter*, 107; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, 37, has him gaon of Pumbedita, who died in 759. Aḥa of Shabḥa: Sherira, *ibid.*, 103; in what Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, 37, writes there is nothing but an uncertain commentary on Sherira Gaon's text. The Responsa: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Berākhot*, I, no. 308; II, no. 224. Aḥa gaon

(182) YEHUDAI B. NAḤMĀN was appointed gaon in Sura, apparently in 757, and served as gaon three and a half years, i.e., until about 761. Above, we have seen Rapoport's attempt at correcting Sherira Gaon's text to thirteen and a half years; yet it seems to me that the desire to complete the one hundred years that the gaon counts, does not change the version of our text, and we have no other way for checking the time. A Geniza fragment preserved an item of information regarding what was decided in the *she'iltā de-firqā*, queries received from the diasporas presented to the *pereq*, i.e., the yeshiva, in Sel. 1070, AD 759; this was, therefore, towards the end of Yehudai Gaon's life, when Naḥrūnai b. Emuna was gaon in Pumbedita. Of Yehudai it was said that he was the grandson of Dīmī; Yehudai was a central figure in the halachic world of the time, not only because of his book, the *halākhōt pesūqōt*. We read of his praises in the contemporary sources: "...Master Rav Yehudai, there was none like him for many years until now, as he was great in Bible and *mishnā* and *talmūd* and *midrāsh* and the *tōsāfōt* and *agādōt* and in applying the *halākhā*", etc. In another version: "until Master Yehudai Gaon, may the memory of this righteous be blessed, arrived on the scene; he was a scholar as great as the early scholars, of blessed memory, wise in rationalizing and who wrote the *halākhōt gedōlōt* and the *halākhōt qeṭṣ'ōt*, and the *halākhōt qeṣūvōt*, to be consulted and relied upon by those who do not manage to study the orders of the *mishnā* and the tractates of the *talmūd*". Furthermore: "A dispatch arrived from the yeshiva: Master Rav Yehudai is brilliant and genuine". As to Yehudai Gaon, it should also be added that some of the sources note that he was blind, as Sherira Gaon put it: "he was illuminating the eyes". In another geonic responsum he is referred to as "light of the world", which means the same.¹⁸²

of Sura: Sherira, *ibid.*, 107; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, 37, where he is gaon of Pumbedita, in 759, for half-a-year. The master of Rav Aḥa: *Ōsar ha-g.*, *ibid.*, II, no. 194, cf. *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ḥagīga*, 8, no. 10 (regarding women's ritual bathing); "Rav Samuel *rōsh kallā*: see *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Berākhot* in the index. See the discussion about the *she'iltōt* in Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 154ff.; J.N. Epstein, *Tarbiz*, 6 (1934/5), 460, showed that the book has a number of talmudic versions that are even earlier than the final editing of the Babylonian Talmud. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 88 showed that the *she'iltōt* served as a source of inspiration for Rashi in his Talmud commentary, and from there he copied entire sentences; Ginzberg, *ibid.*, also sought to prove that the *she'iltōt* were written in Palestine. For the contrary see what Aptowitzer wrote, in *HUCA*, 8-9 (1931/2), 373ff. See about the Aramaic in the *she'iltōt*: J.N. Epstein, *JQR*, NS 12 (1921), 2, 299. Also see: Abramson, *Ḥnyānōt*, 9-23, 319-381, with fragments of the *she'iltōt* from the Geniza. What Menahem Hame'irī wrote in his introduction to *Sefer ha-behīrā*, is interesting, see in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 225: "Rav Aḥa of blessed memory whose son's heart was not so inclined towards study, compiled and wrote a book for him, the *Sefer ha-she'iltōt*, so that every Sabbath when the pericope was recited it would explain to him *halākhōt* and information from the Talmud". A book similar to the *She'iltōt* is the *sefer we-hizhīr* (published by I.M. Freimann, Leipzig, 1873, Warsaw 1880). On it cf. Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 161ff., and see Poznanski, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/3), 405, who discusses the Palestinian Talmud components in the *she'iltōt*.

¹⁸² Yehudai: Sherira, *Letter*, 104, 107; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 37, has him gaon of Pumbedita, who died, according to him, in 763; *she'iltā de-firqā*: TS Ar 18(1).2, see in Abramson, *Sinai*, 49 (1960/61), 217; it should not be assumed that this discussion of queries was connected to Aḥa the author of the *She'iltōt*, who was apparently already in Palestine. From this version, *she'iltā de-firqā*, one may learn that the terms, *pereq* and *yeshivā*, were identical in meaning; see above, sec. 92. Dīmī's grandson: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Shabbāt*, 31; the praises: TS Loan 97, see in Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 29ff., 48, 50ff.; Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, I,

(183) The issue of Yehudai Gaon's book, the *halākhōt pesūqot*, is controversial. One view claims that it is built on Simeon Qayyārā's *halākhōt gedōlōt*; according to the Book of Tradition, Yehudai Gaon "wrote the *halākhōt pesūqot* which he gathered from *halākhōt gedōlōt*". Others argue the opposite, in other words, that the book of *halākhōt gedōlōt* is an extension of the book by Yehudai Gaon. It should be borne in mind that Simeon Qayyārā and Yehudai Gaon were exact contemporaries, and I believe that there is no way of determining with any certainty what the relationship was between the two books, and how their authors operated.

We know of some of the views of Yehudai Gaon from the text ascribed to Pirqoy b. Bāboy, who was a "student of Rāvā, and Rāvā was a student of Yehudai Gaon", the gist of which is the negation of the validity of the Palestinian customs: "...he also wrote to Palestine about *sirkhā de-libbā* (the adhesion of the two lobes of the lungs) and about all the commandments as the Palestinians observe them, contrary to *halākhā*, rather like a custom of apostasy; they rejected it and wrote back: custom cancels *halākhā*. He then sought to overcome them so that they would not be irreligious.... they have forgotten all of the *seder qōdāshim* and all of the Talmud's *seder tōhorōt* in its entirety; and the matter of the Torah scroll that they write on untanned hides", etc. Rāvā, Yehudai Gaon's student, and Pirqoy b. Bāboy's teacher, may be the one who became gaon in Pumbedita (773-782), Rav Aḥa (=Rāvā) b. Davidai.

It appears that such literature, where the laws were gathered in a uniform way and in terse, sharp and unequivocal language, was an emergency measure, and widely accepted in the Jewish diasporas. This certainly also shows the influence of the Muslim world, which had then embarked upon a process of codification; on the other hand, there was also the wish to present clear halachic formulae according to the traditions of the talmudic sages, in order to counter the increasing propaganda of the seceding sectaries. It should be noted that this literature also aroused opposition among both contemporary and later scholars, as said in a responsum ascribed to Paltoi Gaon (mid-ninth century): "What is preferable and praiseworthy to deal with.... or to deal with abbreviated *halākhōt*. This we only ask because most of the people lean towards *halākhōt* and ask, why do we have anything to do with the difficult questions of the Talmud. What they do is not proper, it is even forbidden to do it, since it reduces the study of the Torah. It is written, "he will magnify the law and make it honourable" (Is. 42:21); abbreviated *halākhōt* have only to be studied after having learned and dealt with the entire Talmud.

To a great extent, attention was paid to the polemic against the Palestinian customs, it was also the crux of the dispute that developed between the Babylonian yeshivot and the house of ʿAnan. This polemic was especially salient in the fragments of Pirqoy b. Bāboy's writings, but not only there. There were some essential points in the polemic, such as emphasizing the importance and even the sanctity of the Oral Law; the glorification of the Babylonian yeshivot and belittling the importance of Palestine in the area of *halākhā*; emphasizing the issue of saving life, as

178; Brüll, *JJGL*, 9 (1889), 116f.; *Resp. Ḥemda gen.*, nos. 15, 110; *Nehōrā deʿalmā*, see *Ōsar ha-g. to Shabbāt*, I, no. 73.

opposed to the extreme observance of the sanctity of the Sabbath; the proper order of prayer; which parchment is proper for writing a Torah scroll on it; matters of impure food, especially the adhesion of the two lobes of the lungs.

Among Yehudai's students was a former, deposed, exilarch (above, sec. 78), Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai. It appears that Yehudai's appointment as gaon of Sura expressed the strengthening of Pumbeditan influence. Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, notes that at the time there was not a single scholar in Sura, thus the exilarch, Solomon b. Ḥisdai, appointed Yehudai. He also noted that his brother, Davidai, served as gaon in Pumbedita at the same time: "in those days 'Anan crossed over". Historians have interpreted this last sentence according to what they read in the Karaite sources, i.e., that at the time, shortly after the Abbasid uprising, in the days of al-Manṣūr, Karaism arose. In the discussion above (sec. 80), we learned that there are sufficient sources to refute this view. It would be correct to learn from Sherira Gaon's *Letter* only that the dispute in the yeshivot world became harsher at that time, the house of the exilarchs being at the center of the dispute, and °Anan b. David, who was deposed from the exilarchate in favor of his brother, Ḥananiah—Ḥanīnai (father of Naṭrūnai), led one of the sides of this dispute.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Harkavy, *Resp.*, xxv, notes that Yehudai's book is known by several names: *halākhōt pesūqōt*; *halākhōt qeṭṣōt*, and *halākhōt re'ū*, the Hebrew version of the book, see Eppenstein, *Beiträge*, 67, who believes that the translation was done in Byzantium. Also see Müller, *Lehrsätze*, 4, 13 n. 3; Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 48; *ha-ṣ'ittur*, II, 2. See J.N. Epstein's article: *JJLG*, 12 (1918), 100, on the *halākhōt pesūqōt*. He showed that the Hebrew translation of the *halākhōt pesūqōt* is embedded in the Rashi *siddūr*, from page 232 (no. 460) to 238 (no. 472). Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.* (1942), 189f. cites a fragment of *halākhōt pesūqōt*, TS Box K 6, f. 188 (as it should be written: a complete manuscript copy is found only in the Sassoon Collection). See the responsum ascribed to Paltoi Gaon, *Resp. Hemda gen.* no. 110 and a better version, from the Geniza, in Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 81 (no. 158). *Halākhōt qeṣṣōt*, see Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 99 and see *ibid.*, II, 29ff., the reliance on Yehudai Gaon regarding *sirkhā de-libbā*, even though his opinion was not considered acceptable, and they would say about it, "if you want to get hung (also: to rely), hang yourself from a tall tree". (BT *Pesāḥim*, 112b), Poznanski, *ZfNB*, 15 (1911), 186; Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 165ff.; Hildesheimer, *Sinai Jub. Vol.*, 563, on the question of who copied from whom (The *she'illōt*, *halākhōt gedōlōt*, *halākhōt pesūqōt*); many have struggled with this question and there is no definite way for deciding one way or the other. Also see Etz Chayim, *Alei Sefer*, 11 (1983/4), 19ff., and Abramson's article on the *halākhōt pesūqōt*, in the *Hebrew Encycl.*, XIV; also see now Danzig's comprehensive book, *Māvō la-sefer halākhōt pesūqōt*, and see the survey of this important book of Danzig's: Brody, *Tarbiz*, 64 (1994/5), 139ff. As to Pirqoy b. Bāboy, many have wondered about the meaning of his name. J.N. Epstein, *Tarbiz*, 3 (1930/31), 411, believed that it was a Persian name, Pirek, while Mann, *REJ*, 70 (1920), 173, derived the name from the word *pereq* (chapter). It seems to me that the name is indeed derived from *pereq*, which, as we have seen, can also mean yeshiva (above, previous section and note). Thus it is possible that for contemporaries his name meant: *rōsh ha-yeshivā*, head of the yeshiva. Likewise, they apparently also used the term *fihr* which as we have seen means (approximately) 'the assembly of Jews' (above, secs. 61, 92). Thus, for example, we find in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, V, 300f., an entry on someone who was apparently descended from Jews: Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. Bābawaih b. *Fihrawaih* (= Pirqoy) b. °Abdallah Marzūq, who was Abū Bakr al-°Allāf ("fodder dealer"); this Muḥammad died in Rab'° II in 307, September 919, and see there, X, 363, the article on his son, Abū Muḥammad al-Daqqāq ("flour dealer"), known by his nickname, Ibn Jaḥūma (perhaps it should be: Jaḥūmā, 'the arsonist' [?], 'he with the swollen eyes' [?]). As for Bāboy, it seems to me that his name derives from the name Papa. Thus a possible explanation (merely an assumption) is that the reference here is to the head of the yeshiva, son of Papa. Indeed,

(184) If we now turn our attention to Pumbedita, Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, lists those who served as geonim in the years prior to the Abbasid uprising: JOSEPH B. KŪTNAI (another version: “known *be-khol kitūtai*; by all sort of wounds?”), who was gaon from 739 to 748; SAMUEL B. RAV MAR, from 748 to about 755; NAṬRŪNAI (NAṬROY) HA-KOHEN B. EMUNA, at about 755; Sherira says he was a Baghdadian, from *ittōra rabbā*, “the outer

Yehudai’s successor in the gaonate was Aḥūnai (Hūnā?) ha-Kohen b. Papa. About Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Aḥūnai, who was the Sura gaon after his father Aḥūnai, it was explicitly said that he was the pupil of Rav Yehudai (below, sec. 185); perhaps “Ibn Bāboy” was a kind of family name. One may, of course, ask, why did the book’s copiers seek to conceal the name of the Sura gaon behind the name of Pirqoy b. Bāboy. Such a question may be posed regardless of the explanation, for it is an unusual name. The likely explanation is that the book as it has been preserved, is a Hebrew translation from a Judeo-Persian version, done in a relatively late period, when the translator was no longer aware of the meaning of the name and the identity of this Pirqoy b. Bāboy. As to the controversy with the Palestinian leaders, as is known, Palestine was said to have been subject to apostasy and persecution. See MS Firkovich II, 313, no. 44, in Assaf, *Resp.* (1929): “In a matter that was decided in our Talmud we did not rely on the Talmud of the Palestinian Masters, as since many years learning there was interrupted because of the persecutions”. See Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 367ff. and there MS Antonin 195, responsa of “the pupil of Rāvā, the pupil of Rav Yehudai Gaon” and by the expression *bishevīl she-she’altem*, Harkavy believed that they were of Hillai Gaon, Naṭrūnai’s father, who often used this expression; Schechter, in *Hoffmann Jub. Vol.*, 262; J.N. Epstein, *Madde’e ha-yahadūt*, II, 1926/7, 149f., discusses MS Bodl c 27, finding that it is a quire of *halākhōt* which are an imitation of the *she’iltōt* of Rav Aḥa, but in distinction to the *she’iltōt*, which are written in Aramaic, their language is Hebrew. Sometimes the responsa are presented in the name of Rāvā, the pupil of Yehudai Gaon, as is the testimony of his student, Pirqoy b. Bāboy. Epstein, *ibid.*, 153, finds a clue about when they were written in the attempts to emphasize that the *halākhōt* reached the *ḥakhāmim* from the Torah, i.e., there is here an objection to the views of ‘Anan (mid-eighth century); but this objection could only be against the Karaites, therefore, the book could have been written in the mid-ninth century and even later. Also see Mann, *AJSL*, 46 (1929/30), 265f.; *idem*, *REJ*, 70 (1920), 113ff. Mann notes there that Pirqoy b. Bāboy’s tract is the earliest evidence of missing orders of the Palestinian Talmud, that apparently had never been written. Cf. Frankel, *Mevō’ ha-yerūshalmī*, 45a-49a. Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/31), 383f.; in a fragment that he published of Pirqoy b. Bāboy’s tract, Lewin finds mainly statements against the views of the Karaites, see there, 386. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 6 (1934/5), 78f., suggested the correct order of the Pirqoy b. Bāboy fragments. Also see in Spiegel, *Wolfson Jub. Vol.*, 243ff., a general survey of the Pirqoy b. Bāboy fragments. He sees in this work mainly an expression of Babylonia’s struggle against Palestine after the Abbasid triumph, which strengthened the idea of Babylonia’s centrality in the Jewish world. However, it seems to me that this was not the main factor; the main factor was the struggle against the ‘Anan dynasty, which used the Palestinian customs as a means of attacking the Babylonian yeshivot. See Friedman, *Fleischer Jub. Vol.*, 70 who notes that Abramson identified another fragment of Pirqoy b. Bāboy’s letter, which opposed reciting the Torah in the holiday afternoon prayers, which was the Palestinian custom. On the identity of Rāvā see Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 97 (in the note), and see *idem*, in *Ginzē Schechter*, II, 504. Also see in Müller (above, in this note), 9-11, *halākhōt* ascribed to Yehudai Gaon, usually formulated as a responsum to queries, from the Prague community mss. Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai: *Resp. Hemda gen.*, 3b; Lewin, in Sherira, *Letter*, 108 note a. See Mann, *Texts*, I, 64. Aptowitz, *REJ*, 57 (1909), 245ff., presents a number of fragments where Rāvā, Yehudai Gaon’s pupil, is mentioned. *Ibid.*, 242, Aptowitz expresses the opinion that the tractate *Kallā* (printed at the end of *sefer neziqin*) was part of the *halākhōt gedōlōt*, here relying on Judah of Barcelona, *sefer ha-’ittim*, 246; but this is a misunderstanding, for what Judah of Barcelona meant here (“what the writer [of the *halākhōt*] wrote regarding *Kallā*”) was the tractate studied at the *yerah kallā* which was at that time, cf. Rabbēnū Ḥananel’s commentary to the text of *Ta’anit 10b* (“who is a pupil?” “whoever is asked about the *halākhā* that he is studying and he knows the answer, even in tractate *kallā*”: “in tractate *kallā*: ...which they wish to study it in the *kallā* of Adar”).

bridge". Afterwards serving in the gaonate was ABRAHAM HA-KOHEN, on whom there are no details, apparently he served in the position for only a few months, in 761; succeeding him was DAVIDAI B. NAḤMĀN (the brother of Yehudai, gaon of Sura), 761-767.

A contemporary, mentioned in the Arabic sources, was the first of the grammarians, who laid the foundations for the science of *naḥw*—Arabic grammar—the blind Jew HĀRŪN B. MŪSĀ, a *mawlā* of the Azd. His origins were from Naysābūr, in Persia, and he lived in Baṣra. It is said that he converted to Islam while still in Naysābūr, by Shaykh al-Islām, Abū Muḥammad al-Šābūnī.

One of the famous physicians who flourished at the end of Umayyad times, and the beginning of the Abbasid regime, was FURĀT B. SHAḤĀTHA (or Shaḥnātha) who was the preferred student of the physician Thiyādūq. Though still a youth he was the physician of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, and after the Abbasid revolt he was the personal physician of al-Manšūr's brother's son, ʿĪsā b. Mūsā. He was also the latter's political advisor; thus, for example, he suggested that he move away from Kūfa, because Kūfa was a Shiite center, and if he stayed there he would never enjoy peace and security, nor would his descendants, but the caliph did not let ʿĪsā heed the Jew's advice and leave Kūfa.¹⁸⁴

(185) AḤŪNAI (HŪNĀ) HA-KOHEN B. PAPA (perhaps: Pirqoy b. Bāboy? See note 183 above), served as gaon in Sura for eight years, apparently 761-769. He was succeeded by his son, ḤANĪNAI HA-KOHEN b. Aḥūnai, 769-774. Of him it was said in a geonic responsum, that he was a student of Yehudai Gaon: "he, and Master R. Sumanai *rēsh kallā* and Master R. Naṭrūnai b. R. Ḥanīnai (as it should be; in one version: Ḥavīvai) were students of R. Yehudai Gaon and under his authority". From 774-778 ("three and a half years") Marī ha-Levi b. Mesharshayā served as gaon in Sura; some years later we find ḤANANIAH B. MESHARSHAYĀ, perhaps his brother, serving as gaon in Pumbedita, and they may have been the great grandsons of Mesharshayā b. Taḥlifā, i.e., Sheshnā, who was gaon in Sura around 670.

The last in the first part of the list of Sura geonim, a period of time meant to spread over one hundred years, from Sel. 1000 to 1100, according

¹⁸⁴ See Sherira, *Letter*, 103f.: "a bridge in the Aramaic language is called: *ūlōrā*", see Lewin *ibid.*, note f.; Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 67; in Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 36: Samuel was gaon of Sura, until 745; *ibid.*, 37: Naṭrūnai was Aḥa's sexton (which is Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's conjecture), and was the gaon of Sura. Brüll, *JJGL*, 2 (1876), 146, noted that Natroy could not have been a Baghdadi, because at that time the city was not founded yet. However, it can be argued that Baghdad had existed before al-Manšūr built his capital there (on this see below, sec. 282). Hārūn b. Mūsā, see al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rikh*, XIV, 3ff.; al-Fārīsī, *Siyāq*, 141a; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhib*, IX, 14, and also IV, 338, where he mentions, from among the contemporaries of Hārūn, Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, who was also from a *mawālī* family; see Ibn al-Anbārī (of the thirteenth century AD), 41. The reference here is to people who were active around the Abbasid revolt and also afterwards; cf. Zaydān, *Ta'rikh*, II, 114; Ghunayma, 111. Furāt b. Shaḥātha: Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, I, 161ff. The statements about him are in the entry on Mūsā b. Isrā'īl the physician, of Kūfa, who was the physician of Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī; this Mūsā may also have been a Jew. Also see Ibn al-Qifṭī, 255; cf. Steinscheider, *Ar. Lit.*, 309; Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 49 (1905), 44f. Regarding the name Shaḥātha, Poznanski mentions Joseph b. Judah b. Benjamin Shaḥāta, the copier of MS Bodl 1006; cf. also Meyerhof, *Isis*, 28 (1929), 437; on Thiyādūq (probably: Theodokos) we have no other details; cf. also Sezgin, *GAS*, III, 207. Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē bāvel*, 51.

to Sherira Gaon's list in his Letter, was BĪBOY HA-LEVI B. ABBĀ OF NAHR PAQŌD. He served for "ten and a half years", i.e., from 778-789, and participated, along with two of the Pumbedita geonim, Hūnā ha-Levi b. Isaac (786-788) and Menashē b. Joseph (788-796), in instituting the regulations about movable property, i.e., that a woman's ketubbā payment may be collected from the movable property of the orphans, not just from real estate. Apparently, this ruling was an expression of a new approach following the new conditions that developed in the caliphate, especially the process of accelerated urbanization following the Abbasid uprising, and the ensuing development and economic prosperity. This is even more valid for the decade of al-Mahdī's rule (775-785). As I have already mentioned above, this was a period of developing enterprises and reforms, especially thanks to the initiative of the vizier (of Jewish origin) Abū 'Abdallah Mu'āwiya b. Yāshār. Balādhurī knows, for example, about a canal that al-Mahdī ordered dug in the area of Wāsīt, that was called al-šila (the connection), and by so doing made land available for agricultural cultivation, and interested parties were granted fifty-year leases for the land. Ṭabarī, in his survey of the year AH 161 (beginning 7 October 777), says that al-Mahdī initiated many public projects, repaired roads, milestones and water reservoirs, dug wells and founded workshops. It appears that the edicts against the dhimmīs, regarding the distinguishing dress and taxes, did not stop the Jewish populations' migration from rural communities to the large cities; thus there was now a new economic stratification, as that above-mentioned ruling regarding the transition from land to movable property clearly expresses. Indeed, in the following generation, we find the statement of the gaon of Sura, Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob: "Here the majority of the people do not have any real estate, therefore the later scholars worked out a regulation, in order not to close the door before a borrower".¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Aḥūnai, Sherira, *Letter*, 107; Ḥanīnai, *ibid.*, 108; Aptowitz, *Krauss Jub. Vol.*, 94ff. notes that responsa in the name of Hūnā b. Ḥanīna are mentioned in *halākhōt gedōlōt*; according to him, there is no Hūnā whose father's name was Ḥanīnai in the list of geonim (but there are some people named Hūnā mentioned without their fathers' names), and mentioned are responsa of Rabbēnū Ḥanīnai, who Aptowitz believes was Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Abraham, in his version, Sura gaon from Sel. 941 (630; but the latter was gaon of Pumbedita, from Sel. 1093, 782); it appears that in the two instances the correct version is: Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Aḥūnai (Hūnā), but the copiers were not exact. See Resp. *Ḥemda gen.*, 3b, and cf. Lewin in Sherira, *Letter, ibid.*, note a. Aḥūnai ha-Kohen b. Papa, as stated, may have been Pirqoy b. Bāboy, see above, n. 183. See *Shā'arē ṣedeq*, 46b, where a responsum written by "our Lord and Master Ḥanīna Kahanā b. (Aḥūnai, as it should be) b. Kahanā head of the yeshiva, the pupil of our Lord and Master Yehudai, of blessed memory"; cf. Abramson, *Sinai Jub. Vol.*, 407. Marī ha-Levi: Sherira, *Letter, ibid.* According to Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 38, he died in 772. Bīboy ha-Levi: Sherira, *Letter*, 108, and see Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, *ibid.*, who puts his death at 783. See *Ṣṣar ha-g. to Ketubbōt*, 210: "It was decided in the yeshiva, in the days of Hūnā ha-Levi b. Isaac, that a woman's ketubbā may be collected from movable property of the orphans", and further down, 211, the same, "in the days of our Lord and Master Bīboy and our Lord and Master Hūnā Mar (who is Hūnā ha-Levi), all geonim, of holy blessed memory"; it thus appears that the time of the *taqqānā* was 788. Lewin, in Sherira, *Letter*, 105, n. e, cites the *ʿItṭūr*: "and they wrote to all localities of Israel, with the seal of the exilarch (as it should be read) and four seals of the heads (of the yeshivot), that any *dayyān* who does not collect from movable properties will be fired by us". See Isaac b. Abba Marī, *ha-ʿItṭūr*, I, 34a. The canal: Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 291; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 486. Moses ha-Kohen Gaon, see: Resp. *Ḥemda gen.*, no. 65.

6. *From the end of the eighth century to the beginning of the tenth century*

(186) After Bīboy ha-Levi, HILLAI B. MARĪ (789-798) was the Sura gaon; according to Sherira Gaon his gaonate lasted nine years. His son, Naṭrūnai, who also served as gaon in Sura, notes that his father set *halākhōt* that were accepted by his succeeding geonim, such as rulings on *šīšit* (ritual fringes), according to the custom of *metivtā de-Mātā Maḥsiya* (the Sura yeshiva): “I remember that from my father and Master the gaon (i.e., Hillai) and Master R. Jacob (b. Mordecai) after him and Master R. Ikhōmai after him and Master R. (Isaac) Šādōq (b. Jesse) after him, and all the succeeding geonim” etc.

JACOB HA-KOHEN AND IKHŌMAI HA-KOHEN, two priestly brothers, sons of MORDECAI, served as geonim in Sura for fourteen years, according to Sherira Gaon, who did not know how to define, datewise, the gaonate of each one of them; it appears that the period of fourteen years has to be somewhat shortened, and that their periods would be from 798-810, apparently. From Naṭrūnai b. Hillai’s responsum that I presented above, it is clear that Jacob preceded Ikhōmai. We find that Jacob banned flax threads in *sha’atnez* (combining wool and flax) and ruled on matters regarding sailing on the Sabbath and the value of the “five Tyrian *sela’*s (tetradrachms) of the redemption of the first born”. Also ascribed to him is a responsum concerning “the adhesion of the lungs”. The Rhineland communities repeatedly inquired about this matter 160 years later in the queries they sent to the communities of Palestine. As we know, the period of Hārūn al-Rashīd’s caliphate was one of wars with Byzantium, and, on the other hand, ties were made with Western Europe and its ruler, Charlemagne (these ties are mentioned only in western Christian sources, and not in Arabic sources, nevertheless, their kernel of historical truth should not be in doubt). These ties may provide some of the general background that facilitated closer ties with the Jewish communities of Western Europe, thus as the appeal to the authority of Babylonia, expressed in the query regarding “the adhesion of the lungs”.¹⁸⁶

(187) ISAAC ŠADŌQ B. JESSE served as gaon “two years”, 810-812. He is mentioned in a letter written by his great-grandchild (his granddaughter’s son) Naḥshōn(?), a Pumbeditan, in 953. It reminds the addressee, who was from Christian Spain, that previously many queries had been sent to the Pumbedita personalities, but also to the Sura geonim, the writer’s maternal forebears, foremost among them Šādōq (he was Isaac Šādōq) b. Jesse, and to his son Naḥshōn and to Naḥshōn’s brother, Moses. As noted, the writer

¹⁸⁶ Hillai, Sherira, *Letter*, 114; Ibn Da’ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40. The matter of the *šīšit*: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Yevamōt*, 8f., cf. Halevy, *Dōrōt ha-rish.*, III, 242; see Trani, *Sefer ha-makhriya’*, 10a; Jacob and Ikhōmai, the priestly brothers: Sherira, *Letter*, 114; flax threads: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Shabbāt*, I, no. 89; sailing: *ibid.*, no. 45; redemption of the first-born: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Qiddushin*, 13; adhesion of the lungs: *Sefer ha-pardēs* (Budapest), 126f.; cf. Lewin, in Sherira, *Letter*, 190, n. b.; Büchler, *REJ*, 44 (1902), 237ff.; Gil, *History*, 498. We do not indeed know if it is the Europeans who asked the gaon Jacob ha-Kohen b. Mordecai about the adhesion of the lungs; cf. the article Hārūn al-Rashīd in *EJ*² (by F. Omar); as regards the ties with Charlemagne, see Gil, *ibid.*, pp. 285-289. and see Ibn Da’ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 39f., with information about the priestly brothers, which cannot be relied upon.

turned especially to the people of Aspāmiya, i.e., Christian Spain; it appears that the ties of the Babylonian yeshivot with Christian Spain were strengthened after the Franks, under Louis the Pious, son of Charlemagne, seized Barcelona from the Muslims, in 801, which may possibly provide an explanation for the queries sent to Sura at the time of Isaac Ṣādōq. A person who was apparently the son of the gaon Isaac Ṣādōq, Joseph b. Isaac Ṣādōq, is mentioned in a Geniza letter written on papyrus, apparently of around the mid ninth century, by the merchant Jacob b. Joseph, to a certain b. Shuqayr; from here one may conclude that the son of the gaon emigrated to Egypt, or it may have only been a temporary stay. Isaac Ṣādōq was the gaon who ruled in the matter of the son of the exilarch, Ḥakhaliah b. Isaac (Isqōi), and obligated him to pay his father's widow the sum stipulated in the *ketubbā* (above, sec. 77).

Research was done regarding the name of the gaon. In the responsa he is usually called Ṣādōq, as in the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon. There are two almost identical versions of a responsum, one ascribed to Ṣādōq, the other to Isaac. Zunz had already noticed that in parallel responsa, sometimes the name Ṣādōq is used, and sometimes Isaac, and he thought that the combination, Isaac Ṣādōq, was an artificial combination. Rapoport noted that Naḥshōn Gaon is sometimes called b. Ṣādōq and sometimes b. Isaac, and he thought: either that this was a scribal error, or Ṣādōq was Isaac. Ginzberg believed that those alternate versions derived from the similarity in the initials, *rēsh ṣadē* and *rēsh-yōd-ṣadē*. Then came Mann, who in a Geniza manuscript found a title with: "Naḥshōn bar Isaac Ṣādōq head of the *metivtā de-mātā maḥsiya*". There are other such findings, and now it is clear that his name really was Isaac Ṣādōq.¹⁸⁷

(188) HILLAI B. ḤANANIAH was gaon of Sura for "three and a half years", apparently, 812-816. There is no other information about him, and the few responsa with the name Hillai, cannot with certainty be ascribed to him, or to the above Hillai b. Marī, or to Hillai b. Naṭrūnai. Succeeding him in the gaonate was QIMOI B. ASHĪ, also for "three and a half years", apparently 816-820. The collection "responsa of R. Qīmoi" may either be his or that of Qīmoi b. Aḥai, gaon of Pumbedita.

MOSES (MESHARSHAYĀ) HA-KOHEN B. JACOB was gaon of Sura for "ten and a half years", apparently, 820-830. Halevy wanted to set his time by the fact that he was a contemporary of Joseph b. Rav Rabbi (Ravrevay),

¹⁸⁷ Isaac Ṣādōq, Sherira, *Letter*, 114; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40: 12 years. Also see *Resp. Hemda gen.*, 3a (no. 15); implied there is that Isaac Ṣādōq disputed his predecessors in the Sura gaonate, Jacob and Ikhōmai sons of Mordecai, regarding the adhesion of the lungs. The letter to Spain: 13, d, lines 7 ff.; Joseph b. Isaac Ṣādōq: 104. The matter of Ḥakhaliah: *Ṍsar ha-g. to Ketubbōt*, 151: "Rav Ṣādōq, gaon of Maḥsiya decided that Ḥakhaliah, son of the *nāsī* Isqōy has to pay her off the *ketubbā*". He is called Ṣādōq in most of the responsa, see, for example, *Ṍsar ha-g. to Berākhot*, I, no. 206 (in the matter of *havdālā* (prayer over the exit of the Sabbath) over bread *ibid.*, to *Yevāmōt*, 8f. (regarding *ṣiṣt*, responsum of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai); sometimes Ṣādōq, sometimes Isaac, see *Ṍsar ha-g. to Ketubbōt*, 99f., nos. 260, 261. See Zunz, *Ritus*, 185. See the "Maimonidean corrections" (*hagā'ōt*), *Shabbāt*, xxix, no. 10; Isaac b. Ṣādōq, see Rapoport, in his introduction to *Resp. tesh. g. qadm.*, 9a. Schorr, *He-ḥalūs*, 13 (1889), 75 noticed that the responsum about the "letter of the *rāshū*" in Harkavy, *Resp.*, no. 180 is included also in the *halākhōt pesūqōt* (*hōl ha-mō'ed*) in the name of Isaac Gaon, while in *Shibbole ha-leqet* it is in the name of Naḥshōn Gaon, and in another version: in the name of Ṣādōq Gaon. See Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 122 and see the discussion in Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1918/9), 340.

gaon of Pumbedita, 840-842, according to a responsum of Sherira Gaon's (about parchment): "The scholars of his generation did not agree with him (i.e. with Moses of Sura), such as Master R. Joseph Gaon b. Master Rav Rabbi". Yet Halevy's opinion has no validity for two reasons: (a) the intention may be Joseph b. Abbā, Pumbedita gaon 814-816; (b) it says "scholars of his generation", but this does not refer to the precise time that he was gaon. The time of his gaonate belongs to the period of al-Ma'mūn's rule, which was at first a period of enlightened religious thought and a liberal internal policy, among other things expressed by a considerable reduction of the tax burden, especially regarding agriculture; although there was also persecution of *dhimmīs*, especially in Northern Iraq. The then major event in the Jewish world was the controversy between Daniel b. Saul b. ʿAnan and David b. Judah over the exilarchate, about which I have already written at length (above, secs. 80-81). There is a rather strong basis for seeing Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob as one of the supporters of ʿAnan's grandson, Daniel, because of his approach to the parchment issue. The parchment matter was one of the issues that constituted a kind of litmus paper (actually, a litmus parchment) test to determine whether you were for us or against us. "Master R. Moses allowed that it not be processed", meaning hides that were not treated with tannins as the Babylonian view required, and against the Palestinian view (and apparently of the house of ʿAnan as well); above (sec. 183) I have already presented what Pirqoy b. Bāboy had to say on this issue. Halevy, in *Dōrōt ha-rish.*, rightly noticed that the version in *Sefer ha-eshkōl*, which has "Master R. Ashi permitted" should be: R. Moses, i.e., Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob (perhaps the scribe meant: R. Mesharshayā, the gaon's other name). Some of the imprecations against Moses b. Jacob have been preserved, perhaps a remnant of a fierce struggle that took place between the two parties, and that also might contain some truth: "... there were those who said about him that he habitually used amulets and incantations and the like. Our predecessors looked into the matter quite a bit and discovered that these were false accusations, they were things the like of which could not have taken place. In the Sura yeshiva these things were widespread because they were close to the city of Babylon and the house of Nebuchadnezzar, whereas we are far from these" etc.; so said Hayy Gaon.

It appears that Moses ha-Kohen maintained a system of close ties with the diasporas, we have evidence of special ties with Qayrawān, parallel to the ties developed with the Maghrib by the exilarch, Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai, who was apparently his contemporary. Moses Gaon's responsum is mentioned in a responsum (or an addendum) of "Šemaḥ, judge of the Gate of our Master, the exilarch Ḥisdai, son of the exilarch Naṭrūnai. To our Master Ḥananiah, and all of the scholars and students and elders and the rest of our brethren living in Qayrawān". It is likely, according to the version of that responsum (and the addendum), that the exilarch, through Šemaḥ, his "judge of the Gate", intended to dispute that responsum of Moses Gaon's (regarding a woman's oath about her *ketubbā*). This Ḥisdai,

who was the exilarch before Daniel b. Saul, was apparently an opponent of the views of the descendants of °Anan.¹⁸⁸

(189) For those two generations we have little information about the Pumbedita geonim, even though the person who left us the records about them was himself a gaon of Pumbedita, Sherira Gaon. Ḥananiah b. Mesharshayā, as I noted above, apparently the brother of the gaon of Sura, Marī ha-Levī, served as gaon of Pumbedita from 767-771. Succeeding him was MALKĀ B. AHA, from 771-773. It was in his time that the recognition came about of the fitness and rights of the descendants of Bustanai from the Persian princess, about which I have written (above, sec. 78), and I showed that according to the sources regarding Bustanai, the recognition derived from the conditions that appertained to the Abbasid revolt, when the (temporary) ability of the Persian component to influence the workings of the caliphate increased. Malkā Gaon was the one about whom Sherira Gaon wrote that at the end of his days "he dismissed Naṭrūnai bar Ḥaninai.... and R. Malkā departed to Paradise and Naṭrūnai went westwards". One of Sherira's forebears, ABBĀ B. DAVIDAI, was gaon after Malkā, and served in the gaonate from 773-782. Sherira Gaon refers to him as "our parent, son of our Lord and Master Davidai our forefather". Abbā's father, Davidai, was,

¹⁸⁸ Hillai b. Ḥananiah: Sherira, *Letter*, 114; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40. See for instance the responsum of Hillai ("one is permitted [to marry] the sister of the daughter-in-law"), in *Ḍṣar ha-g.* to *Yevāmōt*, 32. The responsa of Qimoi, see: Adler, *JQR* 9 (1896/7), 681ff.; Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 104 n. 1 (where he presents proof that he was Qimoi gaon of Sura, because it is he who is also mentioned in *halākhōt gedōlōt*, II, 548 where only Sura people are usually mentioned); see also Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 462, and Sherira, *Letter*, 115 (in the 'Spanish' version: Mesharshayā); Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, *ibid.* See Halevy, *Dōrōt*, III, 242. The tax burden: the *muqāsama* (land tax) was reduced from 50% to 20%; see Ibn Ṭīṭṭaqā, 298; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VI, 358; the persecutions: Michael the Syrian, 507 (text); III, 47 (transl.). Moses Gaon on the matter of the parchment and lack of agreement of the scholars: *Sefer ha-eshkōl*, II, 37f. (no. 11); *Ḍṣar ha-g.* to *Sanhedrin* (Toibes), 365 (no. 828); cf. Abramson, *Sinai*, 23 (1947/8), 58; Harkavy, *Resp.*, 226f. (no. 432): "Our Lord and Master Moses Gaon of Maḥsiya would call the *riqq: qelāf* even though it was not tanned"; it appears that he also had his own opinion regarding the formula of the *ketubbā*, see *ibid.*, no. 389; Sherira, *Letter*, 112, note *f* of Lewin; see also: *Ḍṣar ha-g.* to *Shabbāt*, I, no. 250; *ibid.*, to *Giṭṭin*, 93 (no. 238); to *Sanhedrin* (Toibes), no. 827; Halevy, *Dōrōt*, III, 242ff. (some of his statements are unlikely, and the order of the geonim and their times is not as he believes); cf. Brody, *Tarbiz*, 56 (1986/7), 330. Hayy Gaon, Ashkenazi, *Ṭā'am zeq.*, 56, and see also *Ḍṣar ha-g.* to *Hagīgā*, 20; cf. Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 55. The responsa to Qayrawān: *Ḍṣar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 161ff. (nos. 409-412); cf. Dukes, *Ben Chananya*, 4 (1861), 141f. (=MS Bodl Opp 317); Harkavy, *Resp.*, 389; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 483 n. 29; also see the responsum of Moses Gaon regarding someone who deposited money with a woman, *Ḍṣar ha-g.* to *Bāvā gammā*, 63 (no. 201); his responsum regarding a double condition, mentioned in *Ḍṣar ha-g.* to *Qiddūshin*, 6 (no. 16), and his responsum regarding the collection of a debt having been owed by a person now deceased, from movable goods ("since here the majority of the people do not own immovables"), *Resp. Hemda gen.*, 13a (no. 65). Also see the references to where he is mentioned, assembled by Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, I, 44f., who therein cites from the responsum of Simeon b. Šemah Duran, and explains the correct order, i.e., that Moses ha-Kohen preceded Šādōq Gaon (b. Ikhōmai), and not the opposite; he also says that in his opinion they then refrained from using the name Moses because of the honor given to Moses Rabbēnū, as in the Talmud. See Marx, *JJLG*, 5 (1903), 343, who cites from *Shā'arē simḥā*, 100: "after *hōdū le-ēl ha-shamayim* one has to say *yehalelūkhā*, as arranged by Rav Kohen Šedeq and was also said by our Lord and Master Moses", concluding that they had preceded °Amram Gaon in the compilation of a book of prayers.

apparently, gaon, the son of Naḥmān (Davidai b. Naḥmān was gaon, as I have noted [above, sec. 184], from 761-767).

SHĪNŪI GAON (should be read, perhaps, Shīnawaih) served from 782, and according to Sherira Gaon "was not there for long", i.e., it should be understood that he died the same year. Sherira Gaon again mentions him in his *Letter*, while writing about Joseph b. Abbā, who became the Pumbedita gaon in 814; in his youth he spent much time on 'versions', i.e., he studied hard, and "our Lord and Master Shīnūi Gaon, his teacher, congratulated him saying: you should have the privilege of being leader of your nation". From this Lewin thought that it may apparently be learned that Shīnūi Gaon had a "private yeshiva" before he became gaon. Yet this was only a way of speaking about someone as gaon even before his appointment, since that is how he was remembered by later generations, for Sherira Gaon was writing about two hundred years after Shīnūi Gaon.

After Shīnūi Gaon there was ḤANĪNAI HA-KOHEN B. ABRAHAM. In Sherira's *Letter*: the son of Abraham GAON; it was Abraham ha-Kohen, the one who was apparently gaon for a very short time in 761. Ḥanīnai served in the gaonate from 782-786, then, according to Sherira, the exilarch deposed him.

It is likely that the exilarch was Zakkai b. Ahūnai, of the descendants of Bustanai and his Persian wife, Izdādward. Zakkai became exilarch with the help of a previous Pumbedita gaon, Malkā b. Aḥa, in 773, and if so, the deposal took place when Zakkai was already exilarch for about thirteen years. After the deposal of Ḥanīnai, Hūnā ha-Levi b. Isaac was appointed gaon, and served in the position from 786-788. In his time, apparently in 788, the rule (*takkānā*) was made regarding the possibility of collecting the *ketubbā* from movable goods (above, sec. 185). Even the succeeding gaon, Menashe b. Joseph, who served from 788-796, participated in instituting that regulation. We know that this gaon originated in the area of Rādhān, i.e., in the area around Baghdad, for Sherira Gaon says of him: "he was from Gūkhā, of the people of Bē 'Uqbā" (below, secs. 288, 352).¹⁸⁹

(190) Also the next gaon of Pumbedita, Isaiah ha-Levi b. Abbā, was from the Rādhān area: "he was from Kalwādhā, a town close to Baghdad". He was gaon from 796-798. The following gaon was JOSEPH B. SHĪLĀ, of Shīlī, who served in the post from 798-804. Lewin cites from *Sefer ha-pardes* (Constantinople edition), from the end of the responsum regarding the issue of the "adhesion of the lungs", of the Sura gaon, Jacob ha-Kohen

¹⁸⁹ Ḥanīna b. Mesharshayā, see Sherira, *Letter*, 104; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 38. Malkā b. Aḥa: Sherira, *ibid.*; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.* (where the name is garbled). In my article: Gil, *Tarbiz*, 48 (1978/9), 62, I wrote that Rav Malkā was gaon of Sura, and it should, of course, be Pumbedita. Abba b. Davidai: Sherira, *Letter*, *ibid.*; Shīnūi, or Shīnawaih Gaon: Sherira, *ibid.*, 104, 110; in the light of what was said here, what Lewin wrote in note *i* and also in note *b*, is superfluous. Ḥanīnai b. Abraham: Sherira, *Letter*, 104f; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, *ibid.*, who has him gaon of Sura; his father, Abraham ha-Kohen: Sherira, *Letter*, 103. Hūnā ha-Levi b. Isaac: Sherira, *ibid.*, 105; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, who has him, too, as gaon of Sura. Cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 310; 11 (1920/21), 457f. Mann cites Sherira Gaon's responsum from Bodl MS Heb d 46, f. 145v. See *Shā'arē Shevū'ot*, ch. xiii, where the year of the *taqqānā* is Sel. 1098, i.e., 787 (cited by Lewin in Sherira, *Letter*, *ibid.*); Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, *ibid.*, who also has him as gaon of Sura. Menashe b. Joseph (the father, Joseph, was perhaps gaon of Pumbedita, b. Kūtnai, 739-748): Sherira, *Letter*, *ibid.*; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, where he is also gaon of Sura.

b. Mordecai, where it says: "this letter was issued by us, to the Gate (i.e., court) of the town of Shīlā, in which it is written as follows: to the court of our Lord and Master Joseph, head of the yeshiva, son of our Lord and Master Shīlā", and seriously discusses the possibility that Joseph Gaon remained in Shilhī during his gaonate as well. Yet this is only a scribal error, for in another version we find: (issued by us) "to the leaders of the yeshiva". After Joseph b. Shīlā, RAVREVAI HA-KOHEN B. ḤANĪNAI (Hanīna) was gaon, serving from 804-810. Succeeding him was: Ikhōmai (other versions: Ivōmai) HA-KOHEN, Ravrevai's father's brother, i.e., brother of Ḥanīnai Gaon (782-786); both of them, Ikhōmai and Ḥanīnai, were the sons of Abraham ha-Kohen. Ikhōmai ha-Kohen was gaon in 810-814. The following gaon was JOSEPH B. ABBĀ, 814-816. We have seen above that he was the student of Shīnūi, Pumbedita gaon in 782; that period of study was apparently long before Shīnūi's appointment as gaon, for Sherira Gaon says of Joseph b. Abbā, that he was "very old". Sherira Gaon also notes that according to the ranking of the yeshiva (so it is implied) the chief judge of the Court, Qīmoi, who was more learned and preferable to Joseph, should have been appointed to the position of gaon, but because of a dream, "our Lord and Master Joseph was appointed as gaon", and it appears that Lewin was correct in assuming that the name of the dreamer was intentionally omitted from the version of the *Letter*. There was also a tradition in the yeshiva that praised the great piety of Joseph Gaon, about whom it was believed that Elijah the Prophet sat at his side, and that Joseph Gaon even ordered that a space be made for Elijah the Prophet (unseen by anyone else), and from then on an empty space was left at the right of the head of the yeshiva's chair for Elijah the Prophet: "it is therefore that one leaves an empty place to the right of the place of the bench". Sherira Gaon also says that "the grandfather of our grandfather the gaon was his scribe, and undertook to see to the needs of his yeshiva"; clearly he is talking about the grandfather of Judah Gaon b. Samuel *rōsh kallā*, the father of this last mentioned Samuel. Sherira Gaon adds that there was an earthquake on the day of his death. I have not found any confirmation in the sources regarding this 816 earthquake, yet we do know that in the year of Joseph b. Abbā's demise, 816, there was serious rioting in Baghdad. Abū Ḥātim Sahl b. Salāma al-Anṣārī, of Khurāsān, led a rebellious movement against the mafia of the time, guild of the *khafāra* (protection; it appears that our contemporary term, protection, is the most suitable). This movement prevented collecting taxes for the *khafāra*, for the leader said: *khafāra* is inconceivable under Islam. Ṭabarī explains: "what is *khafāra*? A person would go to one of the plantation owners and say: your plantation is now guarded by me, I will protect it against anyone who wants to cause it damage, and you are required to pay me so many dirhams a month; and he was forced to pay him, whether he liked it or not".

In 816-828, ABRAHAM B. SHERIRA served as gaon of Pumbedita (above, sec. 136). He was a Maghribi, from Qābis, and, apparently, a contemporary of Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, Sura gaon. Sherira Gaon explicitly states that in the time of Abraham b. Sherira there was a controversy regarding the exilarchate, between Daniel (b. Saul b. ʿAnan) and David b. Judah, and within the framework of that controversy another controversy broke out, because they wanted to depose Abraham b. Sherira from the gaonate and

appoint the yeshiva's chief judge, JOSEPH B. ḤIYYĀ to the post (also see above, sec. 136). We cannot determine with certainty which party each one of the two, Daniel and David, belonged to. Since Daniel was the exilarch in the years Abraham served as gaon, as I have shown (above, secs. 80-81), perhaps one may conclude that Abraham b. Sherira was a supporter of Daniel's. Nevertheless, an agreement was reached whereby Joseph b. Ḥiyyā would also be referred to as gaon, but Abraham b. Sherira would have priority when they appeared together (apparently at gatherings), and that he would be the first of the speakers. When the two of them arrived in Baghdad for an 'extraordinary' assembly, i.e., not at the time of the *yarḥē kallā* (it seems that this is the way the letter, which is corrupted, should be understood), and the yeshiva's messenger (apparently the *metūrgeman*) announced: "Hearken you to what the heads of the yeshiva intend to say", all the Jews wept, for nothing of the sort had ever before been heard of. We have here an impartial testimony about the deep shock that passed through the Jewish communities during the controversy between the house of 'Anan and its competitors, and that also swept up yeshiva figures. Joseph b. Ḥiyyā "was shocked, got up before the audience and said, I do not want to have anything to do with the gaonate, and he returned to the position of chief judge of the Court. Promptly our Lord and Master Abraham commended him, saying: May the Almighty bestow upon you His benignity". Indeed the gaon after Abraham Gaon's death, was Joseph b. Ḥiyyā, who served for six years, 828-833.

Al-Mas'ūdī mentions among Jewish scholars the Baghdadi Ibrāhīm, about whom we have no other details; he apparently flourished at the beginning of the ninth century; this may have been Abraham b. Sherira, gaon of Pumbedita.¹⁹⁰

(191) In the period now being surveyed, Abū 'UBAYDA MA'MAR B. AL-MUTHANNĀ, the Arabic grammarian of Jewish origin, flourished. He was one of the *mawālī*, protected people, of the clan of the Banū 'Ubaydallah of the Banū Taym (probably b. Murra), of the Quraysh tribe; his father was a Jew of the people of Bājarwān, a village in the area of Raqqa, but some say that a place with that name exists in Armenia. Abū 'Ubayda was born in Rajab 110, October 728. Hārūn al-Rashīd brought him to Baghdad in 188, AD 804. He lived a long life and died in Baṣra in 209, AD 824/5. According to Jāḥiẓ, he was the greatest scholar among both the Khārijīs (the Shiites) and the Sunnīs.

¹⁹⁰ Isaiah ha-Levi: Sherira, *Letter*, 109; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 39; Joseph b. Shīlā: Sherira, *ibid.*, and see there Lewin's note *b*; see *Sefer ha-pardes* (Budapest), 126f. Ravreṣai ha-Kohen: Sherira, *ibid.*; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, calls him Mordecai ha-Kohen, as he is in Zakuto, *ha-Yūḥasin*, 206, but they should not be relied upon; cf. editor's note in the *Book of Trad.*, English part, 51. Ikhōmai, see Sherira, *ibid.* The name, Ikhōmai (Ivōmai) is found also among the geonim of Sura: Ikhōmai ha-Kohen b. Mordecai (798-810). Most of the versions have Ikhōmai. Joseph b. Abbā: Sherira, *ibid.*, 109f. Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*, 39; Joseph b. Judah. See in Sherira, *ibid.*, Lewin's note *f*. The correct reading there would be: Rav Qīmōi, not Rav Joseph, which appears to be a slip of Lewin's pen). See the preferred version of Sherira Gaon's text in ENA 1490, f. 7r, cf. Gil, *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/91), 302 n. 52. Also see the responsum of "our Lord and Master Joseph Gaon, son of our Lord and Master Abbā" (as it should be written; in regard to the *havdālā* over bread), *Ōsar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, I, no. 206, and see note *d* *ibid.*; Abraham b. Sherira and Joseph b. Ḥiyyā: Sherira, *ibid.*, 110f.; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.* The revolt against the *khafāra*: Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1010.

The Jewish astrologer and mathematician, ABŪ ʿUTHMĀN SAHL B. BISHR, lived in the same period. His grandfather was Ḥabīb b. Ḥāyā (thus in the *Fihrist*, and so it should be, not Hānī or Hānā as was corrupted in other Arabic sources; it is the name known to us as Hayy, i.e., a Babylonian version of Ḥayyim). Sahl was in the service of Tāhir b. Ḥusayn al-Awʿar (the blind), governor of Khurāsān in the days of al-Maʾmūn, and also of the succeeding governor, Ḥasan b. Suhayl. Sahl b. Bishr wrote many books on astrology and mathematics (*al-jabr waʾl-muqābala*, algebra and equations) and also the *al-ʿāshir*, thirteen volumes where he gathered the most important of his works. Some of his works were translated into Latin, such as *De revolutionibus*, *Introductorium de principiis*, and others. His works contain Persian terms, yet he was mainly considered a student of Dorotheus of Sidon.

Another Jewish astrologer and mathematician in the days of al-Maʾmūn was Abūʾl-Ṭayyib Sanad b. ʿAlī. He was the caliph's court astrologer, and according to the *Fihrist*, under the influence of the caliph, he converted to Islam. He was also an architect, and according to that same source, he built the synagogue in Baghdad "located behind the *al-Shammāsiyya* gate, by the *ḥarīm* (women's house) of Muʾizz al-dawla" (Aḥmad b. Buwayh, ruler of Iraq, who died in 967). He also left works on astrology and mathematics. Among other things, the measurement of the Earth's circumference is ascribed to him; as he himself told: he accompanied al-Maʾmūn and they went up the mountain in order to measure the disappearance (اغطاط) of the sun when it set and decreased in size (عن قلتها), which he did, and thus concluded what the Earth's circumference was (i.e., he measured the meridian) of the Earth. Another version is that he found the Earth's circumference by measuring the distance between Wāsiṭ and Tadmur.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ On Abū ʿUbayda see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 53; Ibn Qutayba, *Maʿārif*, 543, who notes that he had errors, and that he was hostile towards the Bedouin and even wrote a book censuring them; all the sources note that he was inclined towards the extremist Shiites, the *Khārījīs*. See also Ibn Khallikān, V, 235ff., with a list of his books. Bājarwān, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 454; see also al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *Taʾrīkh*, XIII, 252-258; cf. Sezgin, *GAS*, VIII, 67, where the considerable influence of Abū ʿUbayda on Bukhārī and Ṭabarī is mentioned, and there is a list of his books. See Sezgin, *ibid.*, IX, 65f., on his books on grammar, especially his book *Majāz al-qurʾān*, published by Sezgin (Cairo 1954, 1962) and on the literature around this book. Also see the comprehensive article on Abū ʿUbayda: Lecker, *SJ*, 81:71, 1995. Sahl b. Bishr: Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 274; Ibn al-Qifṭī, 196; Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 25-29; Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 49 (1905), 46f.; Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 34; Sezgin, *ibid.*, VII, 125-128. In Latin translations he is called Zahel, or Zahel Benbriz. See Stegemann's book about Dorotheus of Sidon. In the Arabic sources his name was usually distorted to Darūniyus; in Ibn Ezra: Doronium, which was sometimes copied Dorōrium. He lived in the first century AD, before the year 70. See the critical review by Luckey, *Orientalia*, 14 (1945), 172ff., on the aforementioned book by Stegemann, with a discussion of the Arabic astrological terms and their Greek parallels. Sanad b. ʿAlī: Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 193, 275; Bīrūnī, *Tahdīd*, 91 where he says that Sanad b. ʿAlī was the steward of the estates of Khālid (b. ʿAbd al-Malik al-Marwarūdhī); measuring the longitude: *ibid.*, 220. (The above translation of the Arabic version is a liberal and approximate one.) Ibn al-Qifṭī, 206; Ghunayma, 111; cf. Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 49 (1905), 48. See also Sezgin, *GAS*, VI, 138; Nalino, *ʿIlm al-falak*, 281f., who cites, from a manuscript, which he does not define, the matter of the longitude measurement. On the longitude measurement at the time of al-Maʾmūn see also Abūʾl-Fidaʾ, *Taqwīm al-buldān*, 14, and cf. Gil, *History*, 295, and n. 27. The measurements connected to the setting of the sun and measuring the road between Wāsiṭ and Palmyra are apparently connected to the system of calculations described in

(192) Among the thinkers of the time we find BISHR B. GHAYYĀTH AL-MARISĪ. His father, Ghayyāth Ibn Abī-Karīma, was a Jew, a jeweler, in Kūfa, and was a *mawlā* of Zayd Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. He lived in Baghdad, in a lane known by his name (i.e., al-Marīsī), between the al-Zajjāj canal and the al-Bazzāzīn canal. Bishr died in Dhū'l-ḥijja 218, January 833. He belonged to the school of Abū Ḥanīfa. The main disgrace about him in the Arabic sources is that he believed in the Qur'ān's creation, which is suitable for al-Ma'mūn's period, which in his day was the official dogma. Besides, he did not think that it was wrong for someone to pray towards the sun and the moon, and one may even direct one's prayers toward the ground (i.e., not towards Mecca). God, so he said, was in the ground as He was in Heaven. One of the Jews warned the Muslims: "he will corrupt your religion and your book just as his father corrupted our Prophet and our book; by this he meant the *tawrah*". It was said on him that he was a *zindīq* (extreme heretic, a Manichaean) and founded a sect, the Marīsīs, a group within the Murjī'ī sect. Here is evidence about the participation of Jews (or converts among them) in the extreme rationalist trends of the time; some of these Jews became famous.

A much more famous personality in that same generation was ABŪ'L-ḤUSAYN AḤMAD IBN YAḤYĀ IBN ISHĀQ AL-RĀWANDĪ (Rāwand was a village near Qāsān, in the vicinity of Iṣfahan, some say: near Marw, in Khurāsān), who was a Jew, or the son of a Jew (i.e., a convert). He was considered to be an extreme heretic, known mainly for his books, he wrote about 114 of them. A book of his with arguments against the Mu'tazilis is mentioned, and the most famous of his books were the "Book of the Golden Reed", and the "Book of the Emerald", written against the prophets. Dualistic views along Manichaean lines were ascribed to him, such as that the body contained two essences, and it was said that as such he followed one of the heads of the Mu'tazilis in Baghdad, Abū Sahl b. al-Mu'tamir al-Hilālī, founder of the Bashariyya; some say that he took his views from the above mentioned Bishr b. Ghayyāth al-Marīsī. According to Ibn al-Jawzī, it was his father who had converted, and the Jews would say: he corrupted your book just as his father corrupted the Tawrah (I have presented equally a similar tradition above, about Bishr b. Ghayyāth). He canceled the *naskh* regarding Moses, i.e., Moses is the one considered the last of the prophets, not Muḥammad. Even though he was accused of heresy, he lived a long life, and was crucified when at the age of 86, in the year 298, AD 911 (in the days of al-Muqtadir). According to another version, he died of illness; there are also conflicting views about the time of his death. His main supporter was a wealthy Jew from Ahwāz. According to Ibn al-Jawzī, and other sources, the name of this Jew was Abū 'Isā Ibn Lāwī (b. Levi?), and Ibn al-Rāwandī lived a considerable time in his house. According to Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, he believed in the preexistence of the world and the absence of a creator. It appears that in the following generations there was a greater demand for his writings, as testified by Salmon b. Yerūhim in his commentary to Ecclesiastes (7:16): "Be not righteous over much", that this verse addresses the people in the cities and the markets

Dreyer, *Hist. of Astron.*², 250f. I thank Prof. Sammy Cooperman of the Faculty of Exact Sciences at Tel-Aviv University who aided me in this matter.

who look for the apocryphal books, the books of the philosophers and the books of Ibn al-Rāwandī, books that lead to heresy against God, and His prophets and His books. In what follows there, Salmon makes recriminations against those who rob the money of the poor, the orphans and the widows, spend the money on such books, and have no fear of God.¹⁹²

(193) A young contemporary of Ibn al-Rāwandī, who may have been his student, was Ḥīwī ha-Balkhī, of Balkh, in Khurāsān. His correct name was apparently Ḥayaway, perhaps a transformation of Hebrew Ḥayyim; Yefet b. ʿAlī calls him Ḥaywa, as his name was also written in a fragment of his questions published by Fleischer. In most of the sources it is: Ḥīwī, except for Qirqisānī, where we find the form, apparently the correct one, Ḥayawayh. Vajda believed it should be pronounced: Ḥayōy. As to the reference to his place of origin, ha-Balkhī, there is no doubt that he came from Balkh, in Khurāsān, even though there are Hebrew sources that refer to him as ha-Kalbī (from *kalb*, dog), which is only meant for defamation. As to the time when he wrote his book with two hundred questions about the Bible, Saadia Gaon, in his *Sefer ha-galui*, says about himself that he wrote "the answers to Ḥīwī al-Balkhī, whose book has been in our nation about sixty years". If we say that the assumed time of the writing of the Arabic version of the *Sefer ha-galui* (which is the later one) is 935, then Ḥīwī's book was first known of at about 875. This was the time of the rule in Khurāsān of the Ṣaffarids, about whom it was said that they were among the perverters of the true Islam, Khārijīs. It appears that Ḥīwī wrote his book during the time of the founder of the dynasty, Yaʿqūb Ibn al-Layth, in an atmosphere of relative religious freedom, of revolt and resistance to the Abbasid central government in Baghdad, and of a renewed Persian cultural flowering.¹⁹³

¹⁹² Bishr b. Ghayyāth: Yāfiʿī, *Mir'āh*, II, 78; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS BL Or 4618, 3aff.; Ibn Khallikān, I, 277f.; Ibn al-Rāwandī: see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, in the version of Dodge, I, 94, who cites parts that were missing in Flügel's edition. The *bashariyya*: Ibn Ṭāhir, *Milal*, 110; see also: Yāfiʿī, *Ghirbāl*, MS Paris 1593, 85a; Ibn Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 99ff.; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, III, 175ff.; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, BL Or 4619, 50a; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XI, 112f.; Salmon b. Yerūhim, see the Arabic version in Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 51 (1907), 731; cf. Zucker, *Targūm*, 29; also see the fragments from *Kitāb al-Zumurrud* of Ibn al-Rāwandī, edited by P. Kraus, *RSO*, 14:93, 335, 1933/4, and see Kraus' comments *ibid.*, 354, on the essence of the struggle between the Islamic loyalists against the rationalist trend, whose proponents even negated prophecy; an expression of these trends was in the *Kitāb al-dāmiḡh* that was written against the Qur'ān, see Ritter, *Der Islam*, 19:1, 1930; cf. the Introduction of Nyberg in his edition of *Kitāb al-intiṣār* of ʿAbd al-Rahīm b. Muḥammad al-Khayyāt, 37ff.; Vajda, *REJ*, 99 (1935), 88, doubts Ibn al-Rāwandī's Jewish origins, and argues that it was a contemporary custom to say about someone who deviated from the dogma that he was a Jew or the son of a Jew; but this does not seem likely. Vajda suggests seeing him as a freethinker, what is known in Islam as a *zindīq*, and in our day as an extreme *libre penseur*. See the article on him in *EJ*² (Kraus and Vajda), with more references. See also Vajda, *Oriens*, 15 (1962), 61 n. 1 regarding the polemical comments of Ibn al-Muqammiṣ against Ibn al-Rāwandī.

¹⁹³ A general survey of the sources containing details of Ḥīwī's views, may be found in Davidson, *Saadia's Polemic*, 80ff., and also in Rosenthal, *JQR*, NS 38:317, 419, 1947/8; 39:79, 1948/9. See Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 57; cf. Eppenstein, *Beiträge*, 104; Vajda, *REJ*, 137 (1978), 339 n. 376; Rosenthal, *ibid.*, 38 (1947/8), 317, cites the different forms in which his name was written, and presents a view (which to me seems unlikely) that his name was an Arabic version (from the root *h.w.y.*) of the Hebrew name Asaf. See Fleischer, *Tarbiz*, 51:51, 1981/2. See Saadia Gaon's *Sefer ha-galui* in Harkavy, *Zikkar. la-rish.*, V, 176f.; cf.

(194) Hīwī's views became known mainly through the answers Saadia wrote to his two hundred questions, to the extent that the gaon's answers have reached us. Today there is rather copious information about the subjects upon which Hīwī expressed opinions contrary to those of the Bible, such as regarding sacrifices, anthropomorphism, the binding of Isaac, the transference of the tabernacle to Jerusalem, the non-prevention of Abel's murder, casting suffering onto the people, the flood, the unreasonable punishment God cast on Sodom, etc. We even have information regarding contradictions that he found in the Bible, such as the contradiction between "I will multiply your seed" (Gen. 22:17), and "for ye were the fewest of all people" (Deut. 7:7), the origin of Hiram king of Tyre (I Kings 7:13, as opposed to II Chronicles 2:13); and a number of other contradictions of this sort.

Citations from Hīwī's book, from Yefet b. 'Alī's commentary on Genesis, were first identified and published by Moshe Zucker. Fleischer identified a fragment of his book among the writings of the Cairo Geniza; it deals with Sodom and Gomorra, Lot and his daughters, and the Egyptian plagues. It is clear, even from these minor discoveries, that his book was written in Hebrew, in an acrostic arranged according to the Hebrew alphabet (in reverse). We have no way of knowing with certainty whether Hīwī belonged to a specific trend or sect. According to Saadia Gaon's testimony, that I have presented above, regarding the assumed time of Hīwī's book, clearly about two generations went by before one of the Rabbanites, Saadia Gaon, roused himself to respond. The time gap was certainly a result from the delays in the distribution of texts at that time. Saadia Gaon also mentions Hīwī's ideas in his *siddūr*, and in his "Book of Beliefs and Opinions". Grätz showed that all of the twelve claims to which the gaon responds at the end of section three of his book are directed at Hīwī, and as a matter of course, also what he writes in chapter two of section two. Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, in the "Book of Tradition", says that "Hīwī al-Kalbī fabricated a Torah, and Saadia testified that he saw teachers teaching it to children in books and slates, until Saadia came and defeated them". One may also learn from this statement about the apparently wide distribution of Hīwī al-Balkhī's questions, and also about the time when Saadia Gaon wrote his book against him, apparently when still in Egypt, i.e., at the beginning of the tenth century AD; it appears that Saadia Gaon did not then know that Abū 'Imrān al-Tiflīsī, i.e., Mūsā al-Za'afarānī, wrote "responsa to questions that he ascribed to Ḥayawayh", according to Qirgīsānī, but we have no details about that work or its contents.

One or two generations later, Salmon b. Yerūḥim reacted to Hīwī's statements in his commentary to Ecclesiastes, 7:16: "Be not righteous over much": "Do not argue about the meaning of the book of God.... such as Hīwī al-Balkhī's argument, may God curse him: for he said, why worship Him with sacrifices, for He is not fed, and why worship Him with shewbread, for He does not eat, and why worship Him with candles, for he does not need any light". In the eleventh century we find the Jerusalem Karaite Abū Ya'qūb, Joseph ha-Kohen b. Abraham ha-Rō'e (al-Baṣīr) in

Harkavy's comments in his introduction there, 147. On the Banū al-Ṣaffār see Nöldeke, *Sketches*, 176-206; Barthold, *Nöldeke Pres. Vol.*, 187ff.; Bosworth, *Sīstān*, 109ff., 122.

his "Book of Discrimination" (*kitāb al-tamyīz*), that was translated into Hebrew by Ṭuvia b. Moses, under the name *maḥkīmat peṭī* ("Enlightening the Fool"), arguing against Ḥīwī. The matter is Ḥīwī's opinion that the sea did not part in the Exodus, rather that Moses knew that a low tide would appear in the sea once every 1,000 years.

A fragment of an anonymous commentary on the Torah mentions Ḥīwī concerning Deuteronomy 32:9 ("For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance"): the argument of "Ḥīwī al-Balkhī, may God curse him", that it emerges from the Bible that there are more gods, those of the different nations. Abraham Ibn Ezra also attacks Ḥīwī in a number of places in his Bible commentary (Genesis 3:9; Exodus 14:27, 15:13, 34:29), and calls him 'the criminal', 'the accursed', "may his bones be ground down to powder".¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ See Zucker, *PAAJR*, 40 (1973), Hebrew part, 2f.; the first publication of Saadia Gaon's replies was that of Poznanski in *Ha-seḡfā* of the year 1916, nos. 175-205, 1916 (with some intermissions). Davidson published them again in *Saadia's Polemics*, etc.; see Fleischer, *Tarbīz*, 51 (1981/2), 52ff., where he also mentions the dissertation of H. Ben-Shammai, which contains a citation from Ḥīwī's book, from the above-mentioned commentary of Yefet b. ʿAlī; see also Fleischer, *Mishlē Sāʿid*, 21; see Grätz (Hebrew), III, 297, 473f.; see Harkavy's notes, *ibid.*, where he negates the opinion that the change of his name in some places to al-Kalbī (instead of al-Balkhī; *kalb* = dog) was done to disgrace him (it appears to me that he is not right); and see the prayer for salvation, *hoshāʿnā*, in Saadia Gaon's *siddūr*: "Save us from Ḥīwī and Ḥittī and Ḥamāṭī and their forces"; and it appears that the *ḥīwī* there hints at Ḥīwī al-Balkhī. On the difference in time between Ḥīwī's book and Saadia Gaon's replies, compare what Saadia Gaon's pupil has to say, in Zucker, *Targūm*, 20. See also the answer of Saadia Gaon on the matter of the angels, cited by Judah b. Barzilai of Barcelona, in his *Pērūsh s. yeṣirā*, 20ff. and cf. *Ōṣar ha-g. to Berākhot*, 17. See on Saadia Gaon's rhymed answer: Guttmann, *Religionsphilosophie*, 21f., 157, and also his article: *MGWJ* 28:260, 289, 1879. See Ibn Daʿūd, *Book of Trad.*, 42; about 300 years later, Saadia Ibn Danān copied the statement of Ibn Daʿūd with changes of versions, in his *maʿamār*, 27b. Harkavy, *Meʿassēf nidd.*, 2f., includes a fragment of a commentary on Numbers 14:23, which cites Ḥīwī's claim that what is written there in the Bible is in contradiction to the divine promise, and the answer to it, that the promise was not given to a specific generation; Harkavy believes that the statements are either of Saadia Gaon's or of Samuel b. Hophni. See what I wrote about Mūsā al-Zaʿafarānī al-Tiflīsī (above sec. 153); also see Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 57; Qirqisānī mentions Ḥīwī's views also in his commentary to Genesis, see Zucker, *PAAJR*, 40 (1972), in the Hebrew part, 3ff.; the Arabic source: Salmon b. Yerūhim, in Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 51 (1907), 732, and the Hebrew version in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, 16, 27f.; see the fragment from Joseph al-Baṣīr in Frankl, *MGWJ*, 20 (1871), 157; with the strange expression which should mean 'the ebb' (of the sea at the exodus), apparently a kind of mixing of Arabic and Greek, and he does not mention Ḥīwī by name, but speaks of *al-mulḥid* (the heretic); cf. Vajda, *REJ*, 137 (1978), 339. See the anonymous commentary to Deuteronomy 32:9, MS Petersburg published by Israelsohn, *REJ*, 17 (1888), 312, which he ascribes to Samuel b. Hophni. Also see the comments of the editor (A. Greenbaum) of Samuel b. Hophni's commentary to the Pentateuch, in the appendices, appendix 5 to Deuteronomy, which suggests the possibility that its author was Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (Ibn Sarjāda). Abraham Ibn Ezra: see the (partial) detailing of the places where he mentions Ḥīwī, in Harkavy, *Meʿassēf nidd.* I, 2f. Ḥīwī al-Balkhī is mentioned also in an anonymous book, *maʿānī al-naḥs*, see the Goldziher edition (Berlin 1907), 16: "Rav Saadia Gaon of blessed memory has already written a reply on Ḥīwī al-Balkhī in the Hebrew language.... why did he respond in Hebrew, because his (Ḥīwī's) system was the system of the Zoroastrians and he started to slander the Torah, therefore he answered him, but he could not publicize his answer in the Arabic language". One should not ascribe to the author, writing apparently in the twelfth century, original information about Ḥīwī or his book, and he wrote what seemed rational to him. Moses Ibn Ezra also mentions Ḥīwī, when arguing against the view that everything is predetermined, even a person's foul deeds (i.e.,

(195) It was only natural that a vigorous search would be carried out in the various sources in order to discover the circles, or the groups, that Ḥīwī belonged to, and the texts that influenced his questions. In 1908, Poznanski pointed out similarities between Ḥīwī's arguments and those of Ibn al-Rāwandī, and between them and the attack on the Bible in the Persian book *Shkand gumānik vichār* (the tract that cancels doubts), written by Martan Farrūkh Ohrmazd Datān in the mid-ninth century AD. The text is a Zoroastrian polemic against the Jews, Christians, Muslims and Manichaeans. Chapters 13 and 14 deal with the Jews. Indeed, there is a similarity between some of his arguments and Ḥīwī's questions, such as why did He create the tree of knowledge if its fruit was not meant to be eaten, for it is said that everything was created for man's sake; and how is it possible for God to need Adam's answer in order to know where he was; and why were six days required for the creation if everything was done with "let there be". Especially critical ideas about the Jews are expressed in another Zoroastrian text, the *Denkart*, which contains all sorts of weird ideas about Judaism, that were apparently somewhat influenced by Islam. It lists three forms of Judaism, the first one being that of Moses, and it appears that he also ascribed Christianity to Judaism. It is the *dev*, the imps, that had caused the writing of the Torah, which is a doctrine of lies written by Abraham and Moses. In the search for similarities there was also the opinion of Eppenstein, who believed that Ḥīwī was influenced by the preoccupation with the contradictions in the Qur'ān, which was kind of a fashion in those days; yet this idea has no firm basis. Stein sought to prove that there was a link between Ḥīwī's ideas and Marcion, who wrote the *Antitheseis*, the contradictions, in the mid-second century AD, regarding the contradictions and the differences between the God of the Jewish Bible and that of the New Testament. According to Stein, Marcion's ideas penetrated into Manichaean theology, and through Manichaean channels reached Ḥīwī al-Balkhī. Julius Guttman expressed a similar idea, when he too showed the close link between Marcion's ideas and Manichaean theology, the above mentioned Persian book *Shkand*, and Ḥīwī. Yet if we study these similarities we shall see that the similarity in the arguments is mainly restricted to the Bible chapters of the Creation and the Garden of Eden. Guttman found, for example, that Ḥīwī interpreted the beginning of the creation, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters", in the manner of the Persian religion, in a dualistic way: the earth and the darkness preceded the creation of the world. De Menasce believed that Ḥīwī had Zoroastrian views, and even ascribed to Saadia fear of the Persians, whose influence was still strong in his time (in Egypt?); it is therefore, he believed, that Saadia wrote his answers in Hebrew; this is far-fetched. Davidson attributed to Ḥīwī Christian ideas, for he apparently believed in the Trinity. Kraus and Vajda repeatedly showed the similarity between the views of Ibn al-Rāwandī and Ḥīwī, and Vajda described Ḥīwī as: *un libre penseur radical*.

that there is no free will), see the fragments from his *ḥadīqa*, in Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam yesh.*, 33.

If Hīwī had followers for a number of generations, then it is they who may have been the sectaries against whom sharp arguments were directed by the anonymous author of a text, some of whose parts have been preserved in the Geniza. It is a rhymed polemic, in Hebrew, lauding Judaism and attacking Islam and Christianity, the Karaites (the *mīnīm*), and also an unidentified sect who chose to “be separated from God’s chosen”, i.e., “separated from the Children of Israel”, who said, “we have entered into a pact with the separated of the Ishmaelites” who “laid down the paths of righteousness for the sake of the creed of Abū Hāshim and Gubai”. Those who separated themselves among the Ishmaelites are obviously the *Muʿtazila*. Gubai was Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Jubbāʾī, and Abū Hāshim was his son and pupil. The two of them represented extremist ideas among the *Muʿtazila*, and their main activity was at the beginning of the tenth century AD, i.e., about two-three generations after Hīwī. The similarity, as shown by Mann, between this hidden Jewish sect and Hīwī, was that they were neither, as is implied, Rabbanites or Karaites. It is therefore possible, and this is only speculation, that there was *muʿtazilite* influence on Hīwī, for in his time the *Muʿtazila* were already a developed rationalist highly influential cogitative trend, though rejected and even persecuted, from the time of al-Mutawakkil on.¹⁹⁵

(196) After the death of the gaon Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, in 830, says Sherira Gaon, “the Surans did not have a gaon for two years”. We have no way of knowing if the lapse was due to internal reasons or to the persecutions that took place under Caliph al-Maʾmūn. After these two years, KOHEN ŠEDEQ B. IKHŌMAI became gaon (832-843). He wrote in a responsum regarding the order of the prayers: “after *hōdū le-ēl ha-shāmayim, yehalelūkhā* should be recited”, as his predecessor Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob had ruled. It appears that Kohen Šedeq, like his predecessor, was still an adherent of the house of ʿAnan; in his time the exilarch was Daniel b. Saul b ʿAnan. As I have shown (above, sec. 80), it is Daniel who wrote the letter of 834/5, regarding deferring to the Palestinian yeshiva in matters of the calendar.

After Kohen Šedeq, the gaon in Sura was SAR ŠĀLŌM B. BOAZ (843-853). Statements of Hayy Gaon’s indicate that Sar Šālōm dealt with the

¹⁹⁵ See Poznanski, *ha-Goren*, 7 (1907/8), 127ff.; see the *Shkand* as edited by de Menasce, esp. the introduction, 8, 11f., 14, and also p. 181. See also Molé, *Mél. H. Massé*, 307ff.; *idem*, *Culte*, 55ff.; de Menasce, in *K.R. Cama Oriental Institute Jub. Vol.*, 45ff. The view about the Zoroastrian influence was accepted also by Rosenthal, *JQR*, NS 38 (1948), 419ff. and see Eppenstein, *Beiträge*, 104; Stein, *Klausner Jub. Vol.*, 210ff.; he especially relies on Harnack’s book, *Marcion*; see also Guttmann, in *A. Marx Jub. Vol.*, 95ff., who deals mainly with what the above-mentioned *maʿānī al-naḥs* says about Hīwī. See Davidson, *Saadia’s Polemic*, 31, and following him, Poznanski, *Teshūvōt rav Saadia*, especially the introduction. See Kraus, *RSO*, 14 (1933/4), 354, 365, 371ff.; Vajda, *REJ*, 99 (1935), 81f., 87ff., 90; of special interest is the comparison between *Kūāb al-iḥtījāj* of the Shiite al-Ṭabarsī (died in 1153) and Hīwī’s ideas, mainly the resemblance in Hīwī’s arguments for and against circumcision (as reflected in the above-mentioned book of Davidson, 62) and those of the *zindīq* (‘the heretic’) Jaʿfar al-ṣādiq, the Shiite *imām*, see Vajda, *ibid.*, 87. See also Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 46f.; see the polemical argument mentioned by Mann, *HUCA*, 12-13 (1937/8), 411ff., and see there the matter of the Jewish ‘separatists’ (mainly on pp. 422ff.) and the comparison with Hīwī, *ibid.*, 431, and the connection with the *muʿtazilis* Abū Hāshim and Jubbai. Also see the entries al-Djubbāʾī (by Gardet) and *Muʿtazila* (by Gimaret), in *EL*².

problem of Nīsī, the exilarch's son (we do not know who the exilarch was), of whom it was said that he received an inheritance from an excommunicated man (so the version should apparently be read). The "choice of the scholars" of Sura met with the gaon after Nīsī sought to have his name cleared, and they formulated an act of the Court (*shimmūsh*) according to which Nīsī was invited to submit an appeal in writing. It is not unlikely that in this episode, too, there is a remnant of the controversy between the house of 'Anan and that of David b. Judah over the exilarchate. Relatively many responsa of Sar Shālōm's have been preserved, apparently mainly due to his strong ties with Qayrawān, where the preservation of most of the geonic responsa we possess today began. Preserved, for example, is his responsum regarding the recital of *shōmēr 'ammō yisrā'el*, that "in the yeshiva (of Sura) and the house of our Lord in Babylonia there is no custom" (to recite it); his responsum regarding the Hanukkah candle; and a responsum regarding returning a loan (also ascribed to Šemaḥ b. Palṭoi, gaon of Pumbedita, and also to Isaac, these are the names of the gaon Isaac Šemaḥ). It appears that in his time there was a certain improvement in the internal state of the caliphate, as can be seen perhaps in the fact that Caliph al-Wāthiq (842-847) canceled, in the year 232 (which began on 28 August 846) the *'ushr* (the tax of a tenth) on ships at sea.¹⁹⁶

(197) As to the following two geonim, NAṬRŪNAI B. HILLAI B. MARĪ, and 'AMRAM B. SHESHNĀ, Sherira Gaon is unclear in his *Letter*. He relates a controversy between the two (the first being Naṭrūnai); he ascribes to 'Amram a period of gaonate of eighteen years, while Naṭrūnai, according to him was gaon for eight years (thus in the better versions, "the French one" according to Lewin; in others: ten). Yet this is not possible when constructing the order of the Sura geonim, by their years in the gaonate ascribed to them by Sherira Gaon, from the period of Saadia Gaon backwards, on which I shall elaborate below. Thus it should be assumed that the language of the *Letter* was corrupted, and, in fact, the period of both of their gaonates totaled eighteen years.

The responsum regarding Bustanai, that was apparently written by Hayy Gaon, about which I dealt in the chapter on the exilarchs (above, sec. 78), knows about Naṭrūnai that he was "a relative of the offspring of Bustanai",

¹⁹⁶ Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai: Sherira, *Letter*, 115; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40; a gentile witness: *Ōsar ha-g. to Giṭṭin*, 207 (no. 486); the order of prayers: Ibn Ghayyāth, *Shā'arē S.*, 100; from this Marx, *JLG*, 5 (1907), 343, sought to show that Moses ha-Kohen and Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai were the first to set the order of the prayers (i.e., before *Seder 'Amram Gaon*). Sar Shālōm: Sherira, *ibid.*; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*; regarding Nīsī: MS Paris 585, p. 77, ed. Goldberg, in his edition of Sherira's *Letter*, which he published in 1872/3, 63f., cf. Lewin, *Letter*, *ibid.*, note a; the responsa: *Ōsar ha-g.*, to *Berākhot*, I, no. 10; *ibid.*, to *Shabbāt*, I, no. 66; *ibid.*, to *Bāvā qammā*, 72, no. 97, and see Weinberg, *Teshuvot Rav Sar Shālōm Gaon*, where he gathered 146 of his responsa. See *ibid.*, 8f., some of his imaginary commentaries, such as that Sar Shālōm was the exilarch's brother-in-law, because he interpreted *aḥiēh* in the text regarding Nīsī (above): his sister; in this he followed Goldberg, in his edition of Sherira's *Letter*, 63f.; but the meaning is: "he dismissed him", as is the meaning of this word in Sherira, *Letter* (Lewin's ed.), 104: *Malkā b. Aḥa aḥtēh le-Naṭrūnai*; and that he found support in his search for a scholarly background, only in which the person who would be gaon of Sura could develop, by identifying Boaz, Sar Shālōm's father, with one of the "sons of Boaz" mentioned in the Judeo-Arabic story of a Bustanai from the Geniza. (In fact, he was Boaz b. Jehoshaphat, one of the Karaite *nesi'im*, see Gil, *Hist.*, 790f.). The order of al-Wāthiq: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 35.

meaning the descendants of Shahriyār, Bustanai's son from the Persian princess. It is possible that the beginning of those family ties was with the daughter of Ḥanīnai, "judge of the Gate", that one of the Persian woman's great grandsons married. It is possible that the geonim, Marī b. Mesharshayā, Hillai b. Marī, and Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, were descendants of that same Ḥanīnai, through his daughter.

On the other hand, we have seen (above, secs. 80, 156) the forceful responsa of Naṭrūnai Gaon regarding the attitude towards the sectaries and the house of 'Anan, and certainly the marital relations of his family with that of the Bustanai family did not moderate his stance, especially since there were two branches of Bustanai's descendants—of Shahriyār and of Hisdai. Moreover, when Naṭrūnai, in one of his responsa (regarding ritual fringes), mentions the geonim who preceded him, he lists Hillai, his father, Jacob ha-Kohen b. Mordecai, Ikhōmai ha-Kohen b. Mordecai, and Isaac Ṣādōq b. Jesse, but omits Hillai b. Ḥananiah, Qīmoi b. Ashī, Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, Kohen Ṣedeq b. Ikhōmai, and Sar Shālōm b. Boaz; and includes all of these geonim in one group: "and all of the other geonim", i.e., after those whose names he mentioned. It would appear that this is not due to forgetfulness, but it was the result of reservations based on passed controversies, and we may think: mainly because of the controversy with the house of 'Anan, in which those 'forgotten' may have had a stance opposite to that of his.

Naṭrūnai was a contemporary of Palṭoi b. Abayē, Pumbedita gaon in 841-858, for the two of them are mentioned together in a number of responsa. This of course provides some support for determining the time of Naṭrūnai Gaon, in light of the lack of certainty we feel about the dates regarding Sura in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*. The two of them are listed at the head of a responsum regarding ritual slaughter and checking the animal; regarding an oath over landed and moveable property, and the way the oath should be carried out; regarding *shirṭūt* (marking of lines on which something is to be written; apparently connected to a problem of parchment); regarding the Sabbath eve prayer; regarding oil for the synagogue lamps; regarding the palm frond; regarding informers; regarding mourning; and in the famous responsum regarding Bustanai, saying that "our Lord and Master Eleazar *alūf* of Aspāmiya (Christian Spain), of blessed memory, put this query before the geonim, our Lord and Master Palṭoi and our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai", etc. Usually one should be wary of drawing clear chronological conclusions about the times of the Sura geonim through tracing parallels with the Pumbedita geonim; at times the similarity in the responsa formulae belongs to successive geonim, or perhaps to a responsum rendered by a certain gaon before he was appointed gaon, but was still chief judge of the yeshiva Court. Thus, for example, we find responsa in a similar formula ascribed to Ṣemaḥ b. Palṭoi, Pumbedita gaon (this is Isaac Ṣemaḥ, 872-888), and to Naṭrūnai b. Hillai; yet Ṣemaḥ b. Ḥayyim, gaon of Sura (879-886) might be meant; in all events, here this should not be seen as a support for chronology. Yet in the matter of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai and

Paltoi b. Abayē, quantity becomes quality, and one may conclude with certainty that the periods of their gaonates largely overlap.¹⁹⁷

(198) °Amram b. Sheshnā, as we have seen, was an adversary of Naṭrūnai's, and it appears that his party declared him gaon before his predecessor's demise. It appears that this situation is also reflected in the preamble to a responsum in the laws of ritual fringes: "this is what R. °Amram b. Sheshnā, Head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsiya wrote in a responsum by the Court and the *alūfīm* and the scholars of the yeshiva, who were sitting before him (i.e., were under his authority), in the session of Adar Sel. 1169....". (Adar began in that year, AD 858, on 18 February), and it appears that Naṭrūnai Gaon was still alive. In another responsum, the preamble says, "°Amram b. Sheshnā Head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsiya.... *shālōm* is sent from us and from R. Šemaḥ (b. Hayyim?) the chief judge of the Court and from the *alūfīm* and all the scholars of the yeshiva and all the people of the yeshiva...." (to Meir b. Joseph, whose location is not known to us). °Amram b. Sheshnā also responded to queries received by the yeshiva in Hanukkah Sel. 1170, i.e., mid-November 868. Ginzberg suggested that onto the preamble formula (of the responsum of 858) that has been preserved, should be added: ".... even though our sins have caused [that our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai Gaon, of blessed memory, has departed], Torah has not departed from our yeshiva". Epstein and Mann have already argued that this addition is out of place, for Naṭrūnai Gaon himself was then alive. The inescapable conclusion is that this was written during the controversy between the two, Naṭrūnai and °Amram. As to the time, one should also consider the statement in Sherira Gaon's responsum regarding the rights of lenders in the moveable property of orphans. The

¹⁹⁷ Naṭrūnai: Sherira, *Letter*, 115; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40; the closeness to the house of Bustanai: I, b, lines 3-6: "the gaon of Maḥsiya wrote it to him.... as he was a relative of those scions of Shahriyār", etc.; the responsum regarding *šīṣū*: Abraham b. Isaac, *Sefer ha-eshk.*, II, 99; Isaiah of Trani, *Sefer ha-makhr.*, 10a; °Ṣar ha-g. to Yevāmōt, 8f.; cf. Halevy, *Dōrōt*, III, 242; also see the Maharam, *Responso* (Bloch ed.), 193 (no. 99): Maharam expresses joy after he came across a book of responsa of Babylonian geonim to the scholars of Ifriqiya headed by responsa of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai's (as it should be read) to Judah b. Saul; cf. Büchler, *REJ*, 50 (1905), 147. Also see *Resp. Hemda gen.*, 2a-5a, a group of responsa ascribed to the geonim Naṭrūnai and Paltoi, such as about ritual slaughter and *bediqa*, the examination of the slaughtered animal: no. 15; oath: no. 22; *širtūt*. °Ṣar ha-g. to *Giṭṭin*, 207 (no. 26); Sabbath eve: *ibid.*, to *Berākhōi*, no. 171; oil: *Resp. Hemda gen.*, no. 7; palm frond: °Ṣar ha-g. to *Sukkā*, no. 121; informers: *ibid.*, to *Bāvā qammā*, 49 (no. 130); mourning: Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, *Ör zar'ā*, 86a (as it should be read), cf. Rosenthal, *Shenāiōn*, 11-12 (1985/6), 600f.; the responsum regarding Bustanai: the *Sha'arē ṣedeq* version, no. 17; cf. Brody, *Tarbiz*, 56 (1986/7), 334ff.; see the responsa of Naṭrūnai and Šemaḥ: °Ṣar ha-g. to *Ketubbōt*, 99 (no. 29; matters of *qenāsōt*). See more characteristic responsa of Naṭrūnai on the order of the blessings (mentioned in *Seder °Amram Gaon*, and in Abraham b. Nathan Ha-yarḥi in *ha-Manhig*), see Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 109f., 114f.; the shelf-mark of the manuscript (unidentified in Ginzberg, *ibid.*) is TS G 1, no. 78; the matter of the fines, monies dedicated to the yeshiva, see a quotation in the responsa of Maharam (Bloch edition), 193 (no. 99); also see: Assaf, *Ginzē qedem*, IV (1929/30), 96, where he presents Naṭrūnai's responsa. He notes the characteristic expression in his responsa, "and since you inquired", at the outset of the responsum; Lewin, *Ginzē qedem*, 4 (1929/30), 22f.; 5 (1933/4), 53ff., 63f. Regarding the *kohen*, who is always the first person called to the Torah, even preceding the *nāsī* (i.e., exilarch) and the head of the yeshiva, see °Ṣar ha-g. to *Giṭṭin*, 126 (no. 306). See also Epstein, *Simchoni Mem. Vol.*, 137; Epstein understood correctly, that those 18 years of Sherira's *Letter* include the period of the controversy between Naṭrūnai and °Amram.

inquirer, in his query, mentioned a responsum of ʿAmram Gaon to R. Shabīb (b. Jacob, Qayrawān) noting that 83 years before then the two yeshiva heads and the exilarch “together ruled that debts due to lenders and also (for) a *ketubbā*, may be claimed from moveables”. We know that this ruling, which I have already mentioned (above, secs. 185, 189) was made in AD 788 (as it should be read), during the time of Hūnā (as it should be read) ha-Levi b. Isaac, gaon of Sura. I.e., ʿAmram Gaon’s responsum was apparently written in 871. According to all indications, it appears that the reasonable range of time of ʿAmram Gaon b. Sheshnā’s gaonate (except for the controversy) is 861-872. He was a contemporary of Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay, Abbā (Rāvā) b. Amī, and Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi, geonim of Pumbedita. Regarding the query about *mālōg* properties the people of Qayrawān presented to Naḥshōn Gaon (above, sec. 100), they mentioned that they had previously asked Ṣemaḥ and Mattathias (in that order!) heads of Pumbedita, and also ʿAmram, head of Sura (Naḥshōn Gaon severely disapproves of their having directed the very same query to the two yeshivot). Similar responses, of ʿAmram b. Sheshnā and Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi, are found regarding the *havdālā* prayer over bread. Regarding leaving an orphan with the maternal family, a responder relies on ʿAmram, gaon of Sura, and Ṣemaḥ, gaon of Pumbedita. In light of the quota of years that appears to him to be too restricted (by his calculation, only 14 years) that remain for ʿAmram Gaon (until 871, according to him), Brody was exaggerating; he did not suffice with the controversy about which Sherira Gaon explicitly wrote, when both Naṭrūnai and ʿAmram were referred to as geonim; he reached the conjecture that ʿAmram Gaon had a competing yeshiva for 18 years! It seems to me that this view has no sources to back it up.

The *seder rav ʿAmram*, the earliest prayer book in our possession, is ascribed to ʿAmram Gaon, though I have mentioned (above, sec. 188) that there were those who preceded him. Therein is preserved information about the gaon’s ties with the diasporas: a confirmation of the receipt of 10 gold pieces (=dinars) from Jacob. b. Isaac; the receipt was sent to Isaac b. Simeon, in the name of the gaon and in that of Ṣemaḥ (b. Ḥayyim?), chief judge of the Court, “and from the *alūfīm* and the scholars of the yeshiva and the people of the yeshiva....”. J.N. Epstein has shown that ʿAmram Gaon did not arrange his prayer book by himself; his students did it, for he is mentioned there in the third person. He also mentions that the Pumbeditans did not know the prayer book and only knew about it from the queries directed to them. Sherira Gaon even cast doubt whether the statements there were of ʿAmram Gaon, for “in ʿAmram Gaon’s location” one did not behave that way (regarding the recital of the prayer *yehī nōʿam* at the end of the Sabbath). Much of the prayer book is ascribed to Ṣemaḥ, chief judge of the Court, who was apparently its main editor, and included responsa of the Sura geonim who were his masters—Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, Kohen Ṣedeq b. Ikhōmai, Naṭrūnai b. Hillai—and responsa of [Isaac] Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi, gaon of Pumbedita. It appears this Ṣemaḥ, chief judge of the Court, is Ṣemaḥ b. Ḥayyim b. Isaac Ṣādōq; he is the one who became gaon in Sura after Naḥshōn, his father’s brother.

ʿAmram Gaon’s ties with Barcelona deserve special attention: “ʿAmram b. Sheshnā, head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsīya (as it should be read) to

all of the scholars and their students and the rest of our brethren of the House of Israel who live in the city of Barcelona, our dear, honored, and loved ones", etc. (see above, sec. 128). It should be remembered that the Muslims recaptured Barcelona only a few years before, in 856.

At the end of the days of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, and during the time of the immediately succeeding caliphs, al-Muntaṣir, al-Musta'in, and al-Mu'tazz, there was an alleviation of conditions in the caliphate. Al-Mutawakkil lightened the tax burden and even postponed the *nayrūz*, the Persian new year, according to which the tax collection began, with almost four months (to 11 Rabi' in [as it should be read] AH 245, 16 July 859, instead of 21 March). I have mentioned (above, sec. 171) the matter of the Turkish commander, Bāghir (or Yāghir) who organized al-Mutawakkil's assassination, who had a Jewish *kātib*. In general, it appears that the rise in the influence of the Turkish army units and of their commanders, brought about an alleviation of the pressure on the protected people, because the Turks were apparently less pious and zealous, and not punctilious about following the rules regarding the protected people.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ c. Amram b. Sheshnā: Sherira, *Letter*, 115; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40, where he writes that 'Amram was a contemporary of the Pumbedita gaon, Hayy b. David (888-895); Hayy b. David became gaon about 20 years after 'Amram's death, but this does not preclude having been his contemporary before he became gaon. Adar Sel. 1169: Isaac b. Abbā Marī, *Sefer ha-ittūr*, 68a (with slight improvements); cf. Rapoport, *Töledot*, I, 46, who cited this passage from a manuscript; to Meir b. Joseph: Bodl MS Heb d 48, fs. 11-12; d 63, fs. 62-63. See Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 326; Hanukkah Sel. 1170: TS 10 G 3, f. 5v, in Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 445; see Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 302. See note 9 in Mann, *Texts*, I, 66. Also see Epstein, *ibid.*, 137 and n. 3. The responsum of Sherira Gaon: Bodl d 46, f. 145v; see further: Mann, *JQR*, *ibid.*, 487f.; Aptowitz, *Tarbiz*, 1 (4; 1929/30), 99 n. 16, concurs with Ginzberg that Naṭrūnai died before 858, i.e. he also disregards the controversy, when 'Amram b. Sheshnā referred to himself as gaon. Also see Lewin, in Sherira, *Letter*, 115, note b, with unlikely chronology. To both yeshivot: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/3), 46; Harkavy, *Resp.*, 267 (no. 544); *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 133 (no. 339); Mann, *Texts*, I, 562-567 (Harkavy manuscript). *Havdālā* over bread: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Berākhot*, I, nos. 331, 332. The orphan: Marx, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5), 57ff.; *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Bāvā meš'ā*, 72 (no. 160). See Brody, *Tarbiz*, 56 (1986/7), 334-341. See *Seder 'Amram Gaon*, 49. Šemah, chief judge of the court, is often mentioned in the gaon's responsa: see TS 20.183, at the left, from line 17; also see Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 446; the *siḏdūr*: Epstein, *ibid.*, 122, 131ff., 136; he notes that Šemah the chief judge was also the *dayyānā de-vāvā* ('judge of the Gate') of the exilarch Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai; but it appears that a distinction should be made between the two of them, because of the considerable time gap, for the time of the exilarch, Ḥisdai b. Naṭrūnai, was the beginning of the ninth century, about 40 years prior to 'Amram Gaon. I have already mentioned (above, sec. 114) Šemah b. Solomon's responsum to the people of Qayrawān. See Brody (above, this note), 340f. and his reasonable remark that this Šemah was Šemah b. Ḥayyim, who was later the Sura gaon. Also see Mann, *Texts*, I, 560f., n. 3; also see on *Seder 'Amram Gaon*: Marx, *JLJG*, 5:341, 1903; Brody, *Fleischer Jub. Vol.*, 21ff., rejects the view that the *seder* was not of 'Amram Gaon; the fact that it is interspersed with non-original fragments and geonic responsa, does not prove that in the final analysis 'Amram Gaon was not its author. Barcelona: *Resp. Lyck*, 21a (no. 56); cf. Luzzatto, *Bēṭ ha-ōšār*, 1 (1846/7), 48a; Büchler, *REJ*, 44 (1902), 237; Rosenthal, *Shenāṭon*, 11-12 (1985/6), 604; the statements are intended for Barcelona also at the beginning of *Seder 'Amram Gaon*; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 486. The (second) conquest of Barcelona: see the entry Barshalūna in *EL* (*supra*, sec. 128). TS 10 K 20, no. 9, f. 3, mentions "'Amram b. Sheshnā's quire of responsa". Tax alleviations: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 89; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS Paris 1505, 158a; the postponement of the *nayrūz* is also ascribed to al-Mu'tadid; it was called al-*nayrūz al-mu'taḏidī*, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, MS BL Or 3004, 253b. Cf. Kremer, *Kulturgesch.*, I, 279; see also below, sec. 358.

(199) After the death of Joseph b. Ḥiyyā, ISAAC B. HŪNAI (other versions: b. Hūnā, b. Ḥananiah) became gaon of Pumbedita. According to Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, the chief judge of the Court, Joseph b. Ravrevay, who was an important scholar (*hakim tūvā*; see above, sec. 136) was thus bypassed. For reasons unknown to us, the then exilarch, David b. Judah, preferred Isaac b. Hūnai over Joseph b. Ravrevay. It is possible that his decision was linked to the struggle over the exilarchate between David b. Judah and Daniel b. Saul, of the house of 'Anan. The new gaon managed to defuse the controversy over the gaonate, by making his way to the chief judge of the Court and seeking reconciliation; Isaac b. Hūnai, apparently with the agreement of the rest of the people of the yeshiva, assured Joseph b. Ravrevay that he would be appointed the next gaon. Isaac b. Hūnai died in 839, and, indeed, JOSEPH B. RAVREVAY was then appointed gaon. Sherira Gaon carefully notes the family ties between himself and Joseph: "He is our cousin, grandson of our Lord and Master Abbā Gaon, our grandfather". Abbā, grandfather of Joseph b. Ravrevay, was gaon of Pumbedita and died in 782, and it appears that his son, Ravrevay, was the brother of the father of Samuel *rōsh kallā*, Sherira's father's grandfather. I.e., Joseph b. Ravrevay was not actually a cousin, but he and Sherira were remote descendants of two brothers, sons of Abbā Gaon b. Davidai; Joseph was the grandson of Abbā Gaon, while Sherira was the grandson of his great-grandson.

Joseph b. Ravrevay did indeed become gaon of Pumbedita as he was promised, in 839, and died two years later, in 841. From a passage in *Sefer ha-eshkol*, it was thought that he was a contemporary of Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, gaon of Sura. There it says that Moses ha-Kohen validated the *riqq*, unprocessed parchment, "and the scholars of the generation did not approve of it, such as our Lord and Master Joseph Gaon, the son of our Master Ravrevay". He was indeed a contemporary of his, but they did not serve in the gaonate at the same time, because Moses ha-Kohen died around 830.

PALṬOI B. ABAYE was one of the central personalities throughout the generations of Babylonian geonim, as was his son, Isaac Ṣemaḥ. They were Sherira's antecedents on his grandmother's side, the mother of his father, Ḥananiah Gaon. Palṭoi became gaon in 841 and died in 858. A letter written, in the spring of 953, by a Pumbeditan (Naḥshōn?), a fifth generation descendant of Palṭoi's (the great-grandson of Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Palṭoi) contains the information that Palṭoi maintained ties with the Christian part of Spain, Aspāmiya; he arranged, at their request, that a "Talmud and its explanation" be written for them and sent it to them. Among Palṭoi's descendants was HEZEKIAH B. SAMUEL *rōsh ha-seder*, who is mentioned in the preamble of a responsum to a person of Qayrawān, Bahlūl b. Joseph; Hezekiah was a "grandson of Palṭoi, head of the yeshiva". Ṣemaḥ Ṣedeq, the first gaon of Sura when its gates were reopened around 990, was the grandson of Palṭoi's grandson. It appears that this ramified family, about whom some details may be gleaned only from fragmented and scattered statements, had great influence over the flourishing and the consolidation of the Pumbedita yeshiva; both Palṭoi and his son, Isaac Ṣemaḥ, served relatively long periods in the gaonate, something that certainly led to greater stabilization of the yeshiva. I mentioned (above, sec.

197), a number of geonic responsa ascribed to Palṭoi b. Abayē, and also to Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, gaon of Sura, which proves that there was a partial overlapping of the two men's period of gaonate. Palṭoi's responsa regarding the rules of mourning, should also be noted; his responsum pertaining to the passage of women from town to town (following their husbands); and the highly significant approval that he granted for litigating debtors in gentile courts: "Ruben who brought a suit against Simeon, who refuses to appear in court with him, is permitted to bring the case to the gentile courts in order to get his due".¹⁹⁹

(200) AḤA HA-KOHEN B. MAR RAV (RAVREYAY?) was gaon after Palṭoi, i.e., in 858; the versions in Sherira Gaon's *Letter* regarding his father, are not uniform, but it seems that the reference is to Ravreyay ha-Kohen b. Hanīnai, who was gaon of Pumbedita, 804-810. Aḥa ha-Kohen died six months after becoming gaon. In the time of Palṭoi Gaon b. Abayē, Aḥa was apparently the most prominent of the sons of geonim present at the Pumbedita yeshiva, and was one of seven *alūfīm* at the Pumbedita yeshiva mentioned in a letter written by a Pumbeditan, apparently Hayy b. David, at about 850, to Qayrawān.

After the death of Aḥa ha-Kohen, in 858, a controversy broke out over the Pumbedita gaonate, between MENAḤEM B. JOSEPH B. ḤIYYĀ and MATTATHIAS HA-KOHEN B. RAVREYAY, apparently the brother of Aḥa, the deceased gaon; I have already mentioned this controversy (above, sec. 136). Sherira Gaon notes in his *Letter*: "the choice of the scholars were on his side", i.e., on Menaḥem's side, something that shows the family ties between Sherira's antecedents and the family of the gaon Joseph b. Ḥiyyā (828-833), Menaḥem's father. Nevertheless, in his responsum regarding the *ṣārā* (the additional or rival, wife), Sherira does not mention Menaḥem, but his rival Mattathias, "we know very well some of what occurred in the days of our Lord and Master Palṭoi and our Lord and Master Aḥai and our Lord and Master Mattathias, the geonim", etc. Some responsa of Menaḥem b. Joseph have survived regarding the *havdālā* (post-Sabbath prayer) and the *qiddūsh* (blessing of the wine). He, too, was formerly among the out-

¹⁹⁹ Isaac b. Hūnai: Sherira, *Letter*, 112; he suggested to Joseph that he restrain himself, and that they be as Rāvā and Rav Joseph (*amōrā'im* of the beginning of the fourth century, cf. Sherira, *Letter*, 85), each of whom offered to relinquish the leadership of the Pumbedita yeshiva in favor of the other. Joseph became reconciled and even bowed before the new head of the yeshiva (this appears to have been the custom, as an expression of the acceptance of authority); see Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 39; cf. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 54. Joseph b. Ravreyay: Sherira, *ibid.*; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.* The matter of the parchment: *supra*, sec. 188, and the references there in the note; also: *Ōṣar ha-g. to Shabbāt*, I, no. 250. Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/3), 40, believed that the Joseph the head of the yeshiva mentioned in the polemical fragment of one of the early Karaites that he published there, is Joseph b. Ravreyay; but it could have also been Joseph b. Jacob bar Saṭyā, gaon of Sura in the mid-tenth century. Palṭoi: Sherira, *Letter*, 113; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, *ibid.*; the people of Aspāmiya: 13, c, lines 8ff.; Hezekiah b. Samuel *rōsh-ha-seder*, see Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 59 (from TS Loan 91). Weinberg, *Mirsky Jub. Vol.*, 172, understood that it is Palṭoi who authored the *pitṛōn* (commentary) of the Talmud; but it says there that he only instructed that it be written. On the stability of the Pumbedita yeshiva thanks to the Palṭoi family, see also Rosenthal, *Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 (1985/6), 591, and see in this article a detailed discussion of Palṭoi Gaon's contributions in the field of *halākḥā*, and also details regarding the place of the family descendants in the world of the yeshivot, after Palṭoi Gaon. Laws of mourning: Ibn Ghayyāth, *Shaf'arē s.*, II, 51, 65, 67; women's change of places: *Ōṣar ha-g. to Ketubbōt*, 372; *ibid.*, to *Bāvā qammā*, 69.

standing Pumbedita *alūfīm*. Menahem ha-Kohen died—according to Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, in Sel. 1171, AD 860, only then did the controversy end and all of the yeshiva scholars returned and accepted the authority of Mattathias ha-Kohen. The preamble of a quire of responsa begins: ".... these queries left us for the Gate of the yeshiva of our Lord Mattathias.... and reached him in the month of Nisan, on the eve of Passover, in the year 1174", etc. Thus the date was 7 April 863. From the surviving responsa of Mattathias Gaon: the feeding of silkworms on the Sabbath (there is no difference between them and other domestic animals, whose owners must feed them); issues regarding reciting the Torah; whether a cantor is permitted to stand on an elevated place; the *qaddish* (mourners') prayer at the cemetery; the bride's and groom's cup of wine; on what is one permitted to write the *mezūzā* and *tefillin*; milking on the Sabbath; matters of the *lūlāv* (palm frond); immersion of a slave for slavery; the testimony of a witness who alters his testimony (unacceptable; as was the opinion of Sherira Gaon, unlike that of 'Amram Gaon). Mattathias was also one of the descendants of geonim at Pumbedita in Palṭoi Gaon's time, and was one of the yeshiva *alūfīm* mentioned by Hayy b. David in his above letter.

After Mattathias Gaon's death, the succeeding gaon was the grandson of the Sura gaon, Samuel, Rāvā's grandson, ABBA (RĀVĀ) B. AMĪ, whose gaonate lasted two-and-a-half years (869-872). This was a veteran family that produced three geonim (Rāvā, Samuel, and Abbā), was represented in both Sura and in Pumbedita, and related by marriage to Sherira Gaon's family.²⁰⁰

(201) It may be deduced from the data that I have presented, that this was a period of progress for the Pumbedita yeshiva, and, as we have seen in the chapter (above, sec. 114) about the yeshiva's ties, in this period the ties between this yeshiva and some of the diasporas were strengthened. It appears that Pumbedita was more steadfast when confronted by the novelties the 'Ananite exilarchs sought to institute. Hayy b. David notes in the letter that he wrote during the gaonate of Palṭoi b. Abayē, at about 850, that there were seven *alūfīm* in Pumbedita, four of whom he mentions by name: Aḥa ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay, Menahem b. Joseph b. Ḥiyya, Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay b. Ḥanīna, and Qīmoī ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay (son of the aforementioned Aḥa, unlike Abramson's view, that a

²⁰⁰ Aḥa ha-Kohen: Sherira, *Letter*, 113; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 39; *alūf* in Pumbedita: 4, b, line 5. Menahem, Mattathias: Sherira, *Letter*, 113; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 39f.; Sherira's responsum: *Ṣṣar ha-g. to Yevāmōt*, 19; the responsa of Menahem: *Ṣṣar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, I, no. 270 (see *ibid.* n. b); no. 280. Menahem, *alūf* in Pumbedita: 4, b, line 5. See also responsa ascribed to him, edited by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 2 (1922/3), 3; the queries to Mattathias: TS 20.183, a, right, as from line 18, ed. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 447. The date of queries sent to Mattathias Gaon proves that the version (Sel.) 1175 as the date of the death of Menahem (Sherira, *Letter*, 113) i.e., 864, cannot be correct, and see also Mann, *Texts*, I, 66, n. 10, and see the continuation of the responsum in Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 158; cf. Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 144. Silkworms: *Resp. Sha'arē tesh.*, 22. Reading of the Torah: *Ṣṣar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, 20f.; the cantor: *ibid.*, I, no. 44; *qaddish*: *ibid.*, no. 104; groom and bride: *ibid.*, no. 336; *mezūzā* and *tefillin*: *Ṣṣar ha-g. to Shabbāt*, I, no. 253; milking, *ibid.*, no. 447; *lūlāv*: *Ṣṣar ha-g. to Sukkā*, no. 121; the slave, *ibid.*, to *Yevāmōt*, 111; the testimony: *ibid.*, to *Ketubbōt*, 59f. (no. 179; the text of Sherira Gaon: "what you wrote in the name of Rav 'Amram Gaon of Mahsiya, of blessed memory, is opaque and we do not know where he said it, nor what his reasons were", etc.); *alūf* of Pumbedita: 4, b, line 6. Rāvā: Sherira, *Letter*, 113; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40.

father and son could not be *alūfīm* at the same time; the son, Qīmoi, was a great scholar and later appointed gaon). Of the three the writer does not mention by name, one is the writer himself, i.e., apparently Hayy b. David. All five of them would become geonim, and until this point we have seen the geonim Aḥa, Menahem and Mattathias. These *alūfīm*, the writer notes, sit in the first *dūr* (row) of the yeshiva, and “in the first *dūr* where they sit there are many scholars and elders”. Sura does not even have a fourth of “what the *dūr* of the Pumbedita yeshiva has”, he notes with pride, moreover, half of them (the Surans) are people of Daniel of the house of °Anan, descendants of Ḥisdai (!) the *nāsī*. It appears that this was written when Sar Shālōm b. Boaz was gaon of Sura, because a few years later we find Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, gaon of Sura, strongly attacking the house of “°Anan, may the name of the father of the father of Daniel, the three-fold thread of evil and heresy, rot”. In his above letter, Hayy b. David wallows in the glory of Pumbedita and its students, “of our yeshiva in Fīrūshābūr, who sit and study”; his yeshiva certainly had no adherents of the house of °Anan.

An expression of the strengthening of the ties between the Babylonian yeshivot and the communities in that period, can be found in the references to some people, the most prominent of them being ELEAZAR *alūf* B. SAMUEL, of Lucena, Spain. It appears that his main tie was with the Sura yeshiva. He was from a large and active Jewish community, a center of scholars. Naṭrūnai Gaon notes that upon his arrival he had money for the yeshiva, that alleviated Sura’s financial situation. In a geonic responsum dealing with Bustanai, there is evidence that he had also appealed to the geonim of Pumbedita: “When our Lord and Master Eleazar *alūf*, son of our Lord and Master Samuel, from Ōlīsānō, was here, he presented a query to our Lord and Master Palṭoi Gaon”, etc. It appears that he had a lengthy sojourn in Babylonia, certainly from the late 850s, about 857, until the 870s, because he met with the family of Sherira Gaon—with Judah Gaon b. Samuel, Sherira’s paternal grandfather, and with Mīshoi *alūf*, his maternal grandfather. He told them about “the Italian *īsār*” (=as, *assarius*, a copper coin), still valid in Italy, in the north and in the south (“in Ifranja and the land of Edom”), and that as Naḥshōn Gaon had asked him to write to Aspāmiya (Christian Spain) that they send him four of the “Italian *īsārs*”, he indeed acquiesced to the request and wrote to them. He also explained difficult talmudic words for the people of the yeshiva, especially those in Greek and Latin (*rūmiya* or *ifranjiya*). He even gave Naṭrūnai testimony (above, sec. 160): °Anan’s book of precepts, “his book of abominations, known as the book of precepts, and some of the tricks therein, were seen by our Lord and Master Eleazar *alūf*, of blessed memory”; it seems that the blessing of the deceased is not appropriate, because, as we have seen, Eleazar was still alive at the time of the geonim Naḥshōn and Judah). Other responsa sent by Naṭrūnai Gaon are mentioned as well. Among the personalities of the period, one should mention SAMUEL *rōsh kallā* and *alūf*, father of Judah, grandfather of Sherira Gaon. He is mentioned in the preamble of a letter of Sherira Gaon’s to Qayrawān: “Samuel, grandson of the head of the yeshiva *shelgōlā*” (“of the Diaspora” i.e., Pumbedita); he was apparently the grandson of the gaon Abbā b. Davidai (733-782). Samuel’s father, whose name we do not know, was the scribe of the

yeshiva in the time of the gaon Joseph b. Abbā (814-816; see above, sec. 199).

The time of the geonim of Sura and of Pumbedita in this period, when there were some geonim who left their mark in the contemporary sources—Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, ʿAmram b. Sheshnā, Palṭoi b. Abayē, Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay—was one of struggle against secession and the sectaries, for this is the time of the adherents of Ismaʿīl and of Mišhoi of ʿUkbara (above, secs. 153-154); yet this was also a time of internal struggles, especially against the family of ʿAnan and their supporters, who, as we have seen, had gathered strong support in Sura as well as in the Palestinian yeshiva. It also appears that in this period there were people who converted and joined the world of the scholars of Islam. Thus we find Saʿīd b. ʿUthmān b. ʿAyyāsh who mentions a *ḥadīth*, that he ascribes to the Prophet of Islam, regarding Joshua who halted the course of the sun; Yūsuf b. Mūsā b. Rashīd al-Qaṭṭān (“cotton merchant”) of Ahwāz, who had for many years lived in Rayy and Baghdad, and who died in 867; Saʿīd b. al-Ḥasan al-Rūzbihān, the latter’s student, known as Abū ʿAbdallah; he died before his teacher did, in 861. In that same period there is also mention of a Jewish astrologer by the name of Ibn Sīmawayh, who wrote an introduction to a book about the stars. A Muslim scholar whom Ibn al-Jawzī defines as “an authority, one of the best among the Muslims”, was Ibrāhīm b. Mālik b. Yahūdḥā (=Judah) b. Ishāq al-Bazzār (seed or grains merchant). According to the names, he was clearly of Jewish origin, as is implied also in the traits ascribed to him. He was the teacher of Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, one of the most important interpreters of the Qurʾān. Ibrāhīm b. Mālik died in March 878, at the age of eighty.²⁰¹

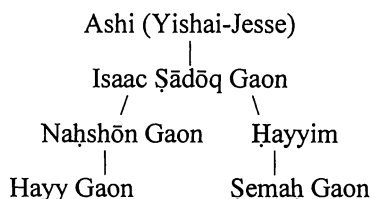
(202) Succeeding ʿAmram b. Sheshnā in the Sura gaonate, was NAḤSHŌN B. ISAAC ŠADŌQ B. JESSE. As we have seen, his father was Sura gaon about sixty years before, something that certainly indicates Naḥshōn’s age when he became gaon—he was apparently in his sixties, maybe even older. He served as gaon for eight years, and died (estimated) in 879. According to what has been preserved, he was sent queries in 872. From a number of preserved responsa it appears that he was a contemporary of Isaac Šemaḥ b. Palṭoi, gaon of Pumbedita (872-888); there are queries

²⁰¹ See Hayy b. David’s letter, 4. Cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 10. See the text of Naṭrūnai Gaon: *Seder ʿAmram Gaon*, I, 207. On Eleazar b. Samuel see a comprehensive survey and references in Poznanski, *Hakedem*, 2 (1908/9), 98f. The story of Bustanai: 1, a, lines 28-29; cf. Abramson, *Shenātōn*, 11-12 (1983-1986), 31ff.; see also *Ōsar ha-g. to Yevāmōi*, 42 and note c; 109 and note c; the Italian *īsar*: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 201; *Ōsar ha-g. to Qiddūshīn*, 15 (no. 45). Samuel *alūf*: Sherira, *Letter*, 119; he was the grandson of the gaon Abbā b. Davidai, see *ibid.*, 104, 112; cf. MS Firkovich II, 313f., 7a, in Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 206: “and all the ancient ones, both our Lord, the enlightener of our eyes, our Master Samuel *alūf*, the father of the gaon who was the father of the gaon our father, and our Lord and Master Naḥshōn”, etc. Also see Sherira Gaon’s letter to Qayrawān: 22, with the formula: “Samuel the grandson of the head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora”. The Islamic scholars: al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrikh*, IX, 99; XIV, 304; IX, 104. Even though this great author of the biographies does not note that they were descendants of Jews, it seems likely to me that they were; the Persian name Rūzbihān (=Yōm Tōv) was common name among Jews. Ibn Sīmawayh: Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 278; Ibn al-Qifṭī, 437; Sezgin, *GAS*, VI, 172. Ibrāhīm b. Mālik: Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, V, 46; in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī: *Taʾrikh*, VI, 186: b. Bahbūd (instead of b. Yahūdḥā); al-Bazzāz (the clothes merchant, instead of al-Bazzār).

explicitly addressed to both of them, one version relating to Naḥshōn, the other to Isaac Ṣemaḥ. Apparently, Naḥshōn Gaon is also mentioned with Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay, gaon of Pumbedita earlier than the latter (860-869), in a responsum dealing with the husband's rights to the *mālōg* properties. Implied therein is that Mattathias disagreed with him: "but our Lord and Master Mattathias sent" (his opinion), etc.; however, it should be assumed that Naḥshōn wrote his responsa a number of years after Mattathias' death.

We have a responsum (that I have already mentioned above, sec. 100) that Naḥshōn Gaon sent to the people of Qayrawān, after the questioners (regarding a woman who sold property without her husband's permission) noted that they had already inquired about the same matter in a query sent to (Isaac) Ṣemaḥ and Mattathias, heads of the yeshiva (of Pumbedita; the order is, of course, to be reversed, for Mattathias preceded Isaac Ṣemaḥ). We have seen that Naḥshōn Gaon chided the inquirers for approaching two yeshivot with the same query.

Among the students who dealt with the details that have been preserved in the sources about Naḥshōn Gaon, special mention should be made of Rapoport. He had already correctly described the family ties: the father of the family was Ashī (another version: Yishai [Jesse]), the father of Isaac Ṣādōq, gaon of Sura; Isaac Ṣādōq's sons were Naḥshōn and Ḥayyim; the Naḥshōn we are dealing with was gaon of Sura; Ḥayyim was the father of Ṣemaḥ, gaon of Sura (apparently in the years 879-886); Naḥshōn's son, Hayy, was also gaon of Sura (apparently in 886-896):



It appears that Qīmoi b. Ashī, gaon of Sura (816-820), apparently the brother of Isaac Ṣādōq, also belonged to this family. It may be that Hayy b. Qāyōmā, who according to Nathan the Babylonian was gaon of Sura about 928, was a more distant shoot of the family (below, sec. 204). Naḥshōn Gaon had two other brothers aside from Ḥayyim. One, putatively, was Joseph, who apparently spent time in Egypt (above, sec 187). The other, Moses, is mentioned in a letter of 953 by the anonymous writer (Naḥshōn?) who was the grandson of Tōv, chief judge of the Pumbedita yeshiva court; he writes that there were Spaniards who used to send their queries to (Isaac) Ṣādōq b. Jesse and his son, Naḥshōn, and to his brother, Moses. Moses is also mentioned in the preamble of a letter of Sherira Gaon to Ephraim b. Ṣādōq in Fustat (ca. 980). Moses is none other than Mīshawayh *alūf*, father of ʿAmram, Sherira Gaon's mother's brother. I.e., Moses-Mīshawayh was Sherira's maternal grandfather. Moses-Mīshawayh was the scribe of the Pumbedita yeshiva at the time of Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi. Among the people who were in contact with Naḥshōn Gaon and later with his son Hayy, we know mainly of Shabīb b. Jacob, of Qayrawān, who was apparently active as head of the community in the second half of the ninth century.

Naḥshōn Gaon wrote a commentary to the Talmud tractate *Bāvā qammā*. Among his many preserved responsa I will note the matter of gentiles' bread (on food there is only rebuke, not lashes); the feeding of silkworms on the Sabbath; the writing of four ells of land in Palestine in deeds. Sherira Gaon, in one of his responsa, lists him as the most important of the Sura scholars who opposed the view of Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, who permitted the use of unprocessed parchment (above, sec. 188).²⁰²

(203) After Naḥshōn Gaon's death in 879, ŠEMAḤ B. ḤAYYIM, Naḥshōn's brother, became gaon of Sura. He had apparently been chief judge of the Sura Court before then, and "Šemaḥ, chief judge of the Court", is mentioned in the time of 'Amram Gaon, especially, as we have seen, in *Seder 'Amram Gaon*. His lineage was corrupted in Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Tradition*, which states that he was Naḥshōn Gaon's brother. In an ancient *qaddish* prayer published by B.M. Lewin, and that was apparently written at about 880, there are included prayers for "our Lord Šemaḥ head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our Lord Paltoi, head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*", and also "for Our Lord Šemaḥ, head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our Lord Ḥayyim", another confirmation of the assumed time of Šemaḥ b. Ḥayyim, whose gaonate (879-886) partially overlaps that of Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi, gaon of Pumbedita (872-888).

From what Šemaḥ b. Ḥayyim wrote, only his responsum to the people of Qayrawān, regarding Eldad ha-Dani, that I have already mentioned (above, sec. 118) has been preserved. Another responsum presented under the name Šemaḥ Gaon, which was apparently by Šemaḥ b. Ḥayyim, deals with fines, prescribing that fines are not imposed for bodily harm, but the offending party has to placate the victim with money or speech (other versions: he is

²⁰² Naḥshōn b. Isaac Šādōq: Sherira, *Letter*, 116; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 41. The queries in Sel. 1183: Epstein, *Simchoni Mem. Vol.*, 138, based on MS Antonin 890, fol. 1a. A contemporary of Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 320; *ibid.*, 70 (no. 193; regarding payment of a debt); 215 (no. 542, the gift of an adolescent); 255 (no. 613); a responsum ascribed to Naḥshōn: in Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 27, is ascribed in the version of Buber, *Grätz Jub. Vol.* (the Hebrew part), 17, to Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi; but see Abramson, *'Inyānōt*, 36ff., who shows that in the latter place (*Grätz Jub. Vol.*) there is only the formulation of the query, not the responsum; thus we do not have the responsum of Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi; also see *Ōsar ha-g.*, *ibid.*, 326 (no. 739, defrayment of a debt); *ibid.*, II, 49; to *Qiddūshin*, 160, n. h; to *Giṭṭin*, 180 n. b, 183 n. g, 188 n. a. Mattathias: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 133 (no. 339, 341); see also Harkavy, *Resp.*, 267 (no. 544) and in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/3), 46. The responsum to the people of Qayrawān as preserved in a Karaite tract, see Mann, *Texts*, I, 558-567; Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/3), 41, 46ff.; and cf. Abramson, *'Inyānōt*, 36-42; Rosenthal, *Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 (1983-1986), 598ff. See Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, I, 119, and his introduction to *Resp. Tesh. geon. qadm.*, 9a-b. Rapoport notes, moreover, that sometimes the name Naḥshōn was corrupted to Naḥmān, though there was never a gaon by the name of Naḥmān. Moses b. Isaac Šādōq, see 13, e, lines 4, 16. 26, line 1, also see the preamble to this fragment. Shabīb b. Jacob is mentioned in 44, b, lines 7-8; in TS 12.856, in: Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 444; see also Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 27, 35, and see his comments *ibid.*, 3f. His commentary to *Bāvā qammā*: see Epstein, *Pērūsh Tōh.*, 72 (as it should be): the meaning of *mālōgma* (*Bāvā qammā*, 102a), cf. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 246ff. and see its preamble: 242ff.; the shelf-mark (which he did not specify) in the TS collection is G I, no. 90; cf. also: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Bāvā qammā*, 76 n. b; bread of gentiles: Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 26; silkworms: *Resp. Sha'arē tesh.*, no. 230; four ells: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Qiddūshin*, 60 (no. 187); the matter of the parchment: *ibid.*, to *Giṭṭin*, 93 n. b. Rapoport ascribed to Naḥshōn Gaon a responsum regarding the purchase of the crimson dye, see in his introduction to *Resp. geon. qadm.* 7b, and see the responsum there, no. 150.

banned until he reconciles him); and there he presents a precedent that he ascribed to Šādōq Gaon, i.e., Isaac Šādōq, his grandfather.

Šemaḥ b. Hayyim was apparently the gaon when the *seder tannā'im wa-amōrā'im*, printed in many editions, was written. Besides details about the sages of the Talmud, it is mainly composed of rules of how to reach a decision where there are contradictions between two *tannā'im*, or between two *amōrā'im*. It was composed either in 884 or 886.

After the death of Šemaḥ b. Hayyim (apparently in 886), R. MALKĀ was appointed gaon, but he died only one month later; here Sherira Gaon notes that most of the "elders of Mātā Maḥsiya died within three months". There may have been a plague, yet there is no information about a plague at that time in the Arabic sources. After Malkā's death, HAYY B. NAḤSHŌN became gaon of Sura, and served in the post until his death ten years later, i.e., probably, in 896. Some of his responsa have been preserved, including a fragment of a responsum of a succeeding gaon of Sura, based on the ruling of "our Lord and Master Hayy gaon of Maḥsiya". The responsum apparently deals with an issue in the Babylonian Talmud, *Hullin* 139b.

As shown by Nehemiah Allony, Hayy b. Naḥshōn was the author of a Torah commentary that is mentioned in a number of lists of books in the Geniza, and that made its way to a Karaite in Persia, who copied it and named his version *sefer pitrōn tōrā*, the "Book of Torah Commentary". E.E. Urbach edited this book, and in the introduction concluded, on the basis of various considerations, that the book was written in the time of Hayy b. Naḥshōn.

Hayy b. Naḥshōn, along with his father Naḥshōn (Qirqisānī's version), translated ʿAnan's book (Book of Precepts) from Aramaic to Hebrew, implying that they did so in order to determine whether anything was there that was not in the books of the Rabbanites. Yefet b. ʿAlī mentions Hayy in his commentary on chapter twenty-three of Leviticus (regarding Passover): R. Hayy, head of the yeshiva, was the one who indicated that R. Isaac Nappāhā was the one who instituted the calendrical order on the basis of calculations (above, sec. 143). Pinsker was in a quandary over Hayy's identity, because chronologically, it is not possible that Hayy b. Sherira is meant, and as to Hayy b. David (gaon of Pumbedita, 889-896) he believed that he was only a judge in Baghdad (below, sec. 205) not knowing that he was a yeshiva head. It seems to me, that the Hayy meant is the Hayy we have been discussing, b. Naḥshōn, for it suits the time frame and the special tie and mutual interest during the struggle between the Surans, and ʿAnan and his house and the Karaites. Therefore, I also ascribe to Hayy b. Naḥshōn the passage of Qirqisānī that I have presented above.

From among Hayy b. Naḥshōn's responsa, I will note the responsum regarding the desecration of the Sabbath; a responsum regarding release from vows, which is one of the more strict in this issue: "we do not abrogate vows and are not used to revoking them, neither on Rosh ha-Shana or on Yom Kippūr, and we have not heard that our masters behaved this way at all"; a responsum regarding the wine of gentiles; a responsum

regarding the bread of gentiles; a responsum regarding permission to violate the Sabbath when life is in danger, for those on the roads.²⁰³

(204) HILLAI B. NAṬRŪNAI became gaon after Hayy b. Naḥshōn, apparently in 896, and died eight years later, in 904. He became gaon about thirty-five years after the death of his father, Naṭrūnai b. Hillai. The central fact known about him from the scant sources at our disposal, is that in his time the Sura yeshiva had ties with the Maghrib. There is evidence of it in a Geniza fragment, a remnant of a letter of the Sura yeshiva, apparently from the end of the tenth century. The writer mentions the queries the community would send to the yeshiva, "to our Lord and Master Hillai Gaon son of our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai Gaon, of blessed memory". The Qayrawān community wrote in a similar manner in a query sent to the gaon of Pumbedita, Hayy b. Sherira, regarding the formula of a deed of attorney used by the "people of Qayrawān from the days of their ancestors until now", "as they found in the responsa of the earliest geonim that their ancestors asked of our Master Hillai Gaon, of blessed memory". There is also a responsum regarding a *mezūzā*, and we know of his position in favor of monetary compensation for the buyer along with the right of a widower to regain real estate his wife had sold: "a query was presented before our Lord and Master 'Amram, whether the husband can recover it from the buyers in money, and he said: not in money. This is what our Lords and Masters Naḥshōn and Naṭrūnai said and also.... (name missing, probably Mattathias); whereas our Lord and Master Hillai said: in money".

²⁰³ Ṣemaḥ b. Ḥayyim: Sherira, *Letter*, 116, and see *ibid.* Lewin's notes. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 41; see *ibid.*, in the English part, 130, editor's notes to line 117; also: Rapoport, in his introduction to *Resp. geon. qadm.*, 9b, on the corruption in Abraham Ibn Da'ūd. The *qaddish*: Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 2 (1922/3), 48. Grätz, *MGWJ*, 20 (1871), 52, was still hesitant if the responsum regarding Eldad ha-Dani was of Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi, but A. Epstein (Eldad ha-Dani, 9) had already shown that in the version of *Shalshelet ha-qabbāla* it says Ṣemaḥ Gaon of Mātā Maḥsiya', i.e. of Sura, and he is Ṣemaḥ b. Ḥayyim. See Müller, *Maṭteah*, 141, where he listed the mentions of him. Regarding *qenāsōt*: Ṣsar ha-g. to *Ketubbōt*, 99. *Seder tannā'īm wa-amōrā'īm*: see Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 262f., who ascribes it to Naḥshōn Gaon; Assaf, *Teg. ha-g.*, 147f.; who shows that it was written by one of the Sura scholars; he has details about its editions. Malkā, the deaths of the Sura scholars: Sherira, *Letter*, 116; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, *ibid.* Hayy b. Naḥshōn: Sherira, *ibid.*; Ibn Da'ūd, *ibid.*; the responsum fragment: 44, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 445; the Torah commentary: Urbach, *Pitrōn*, in the introduction, 28-33; Allony, *Alei sefer*, 9 (1980/81), 56ff.; the translation of 'Anan's book: Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 13. Harkavy, *Zikkārōn*, V, 108 n. b, cites a manuscript of *kitāb al-istibṣār* of Joseph ha-Kohen al-Baṣīr with a synopsis of Qirqisānī's statements, but it says there that the translation was *ilā l-'arabiyya* (into Arabic); cf. Ben-Shammai, in *Musl. Jew. Relat.*, 20f.; Nemoy, *HUCA*, 7 (1930), 397. Qirqisānī, *ibid.*, 805, ascribes a tradition to Hayy b. Naḥshōn, regarding the beginning of the leap years calculation (as it should be understood) instituted by Isaac Nappāḥā, not in order to contradict what the Torah says, but in order to increase unity in the nation (in this Hayy responded to the extremists); also see Qirqisānī, *ibid.*, 23. The comments of Yefet b. 'Alī: in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 149ff.; Lewinsky, *Sinai*, 2 (1937/8), 700, decided that it was not Hayy b. Naḥshōn, "because R. Naḥshōn Gaon died when his son, Hayy, was either a small child or an adolescent", but this opinion has no real basis, because we have no information about the year of Naḥshōn's birth or that of his son, Hayy. See his discussion of the comments of Qirqisānī and Yefet b. 'Alī, *ibid.*, 698ff.; his responsa: Ṣsar ha-g. to 'Erūvīn, 7, note d; *ibid.*, to *Nedārīm*, 23 (following *Resp. Sha'arē tesh.*, 143, and see there the story regarding a sermon on this matter in the yeshiva, by "a wise, pious elder", who had a tract responding to the tract of the gaon himself, "which we did not manage to copy.... as he was eager to leave"). Also see his three responsa edited by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 2 (1922/3), 2f.

In 1903, Harkavy published two leaves of parchment from the Antonin collection, identifying the writer of the responsa fragments therein as Hillai b. Naṣṛūnai, by the language that he used: "and as to what you asked for", a phrase often used by his father Naṣṛūnai. The first responsum deals with the importance and merit of the Oral Law; then there are statements about the bread and oil, etc., of gentiles; regarding the use of hot water and perfumes at circumcision (aimed at °Anan in this matter); regarding the second festival day (in the Diaspora); about the Sabbath that postpones the 9th of Av fast; that there is no obligation to fast on the ten days of repentance (between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippūr). Thus there is clear jab at the Karaites and the house of °Anan, for this was when the merger of the house of °Anan and the Karaites happened; nevertheless, it is difficult to agree about the writer being Hillai b. Naṣṛūnai, as Harkavy believed. The writer refers to himself as "the student of Rāvā the student of Yehudai Gaon", which impedes the above identification, for there was a great time gap: Yehudai Gaon died in 761, when Rāvā, let us assume, was twenty-years-old; Hillai was born before 861 (when his father died), let us assume, in 846, i.e., that he was fifteen when his father died, in 861; if Rāvā was then teaching him, then he would have had to be one-hundred-twenty. Thus it appears that it must be attributed to Naṣṛūnai, himself, or to another member of his family and generation.

In the time of Naṣṛūnai b. Hillai, it would seem, the *Sefer metivōt*, basically a breviary of the Talmud, was compiled, undoubtedly in Sura, with the aim of combining the Babylonian and Palestinian talmuds. The last Sura gaon mentioned there is Šemaḥ b. Ḥayyim, thus it is likely that it was compiled at the time of Hillai Gaon b. Naḥshōn. It is possible that the Karaite Isaiah b. Judah (second half of the eleventh century) was referring to the *metivōt* book when he wrote: "I have already seen the abridgement, made by some Rabbanite scholars, of the two talmuds (those of) Palestine and of Shinar". Alexander Marx and Aptowitzer expressed other ideas about the nature of the *metivōt* book. Alexander Marx believed that it was not a collection of responsa and rulings, but an independent text, such as the *halākhōt gedōlōt*, constructed from passages of the Talmud, with the addition of geonic rulings, and widespread use of the Palestinian Talmud. He also believed that the book was composed in Palestine at about AD 1000.

After the death of Hillai b. Naṣṛūnai (apparently in 904), there were, according to Sherira Gaon, three geonim in Sura: SHALOM B. MISHAEL, seven years (afterwards Sura suffered a serious decline and was left without scholars); JACOB [HA-KOHEN] B. NAṬRŪNAI, thirteen years; and YŌM ṬŌV HA-KOHEN b. Jacob, four years. Nathan the Babylonian adds two names that are absent in Sherira Gaon: °Amram b. Solomon, who according to Nathan was the gaon in Sura when the controversy erupted between Judah (as it should be), gaon of Pumbedita, and the exilarch °Uqba (above, secs. 137-141) and Hayy b. Qāyōmā, who died before the appointment of Saadia Gaon, i.e., at the end of 927 or the beginning of 928, after having been gaon for [kaf, i.e.,] "twenty years" (this may be a corruption of the text, and it should be [bet, i.e.,] "two years"; the Hebrew version—Nathan the Babylonian's Arabic original here is missing—has: year, not years, which suits a number greater than ten). Ginzberg invested much effort in

attempting to resolve the contradictions, but his opinion does not seem likely at all. It should be borne in mind that Nathan the Babylonian was well informed about the events in Sura, thus his testimony should not be discarded in favor of that of Sherira Gaon. According to Sherira Gaon, Sar Shālōm b. Mishael's gaonate lasted seven years, apparently, from 904; yet as we have seen (above, secs. 137-141), at about 907 the controversy erupted between Pumbedita and the Exilarch 'Uqba, and according to Nathan, 'Amram b. Solomon was then gaon of Sura; what Nathan says should be accepted, 'Amram b. Solomon was apparently left out of Sherira's list, and he was indeed gaon of Sura after Shalom b. Mishael, whose gaonate was apparently shorter than that noted by Sherira. As to Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai, he should be placed at about 915, a short time before David b. Zakkai filled the vacuum created in the exilarchate after the 'Uqba affair, this Jacob apparently playing the major role in the appointment of a new exilarch. David b. Zakkai does not mention the gaon of Pumbedita at the beginning of a letter, a fragment of which has been preserved in the Geniza. Thus he wrote it just at the same intermediate time when the Sura yeshiva, but not the Pumbedita yeshiva, recognized him, and he only mentions the gaon of Sura: "Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai head of the yeshiva of the city of Maḥsiya". After Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai, the gaon of Sura was YŌM ṬŌV HA-KOHEN B. JACOB, who according to Sherira Gaon was a weaver, appointed only because there were no scholars left in Sura. Despite these details of Sherira Gaon, we may assume that this Yōm Ṭōv was the son of Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai, i.e., the son of a gaon. Hayy b. Qīmoi (=Qāyōmā) was gaon after Yōm Ṭōv ha-Kohen; only Nathan the Babylonian mentions him, and it is he who became gaon of Sura after the previous Sura gaon, who died some years after David b. Zakkai became exilarch. I.e., we should assume that Yōm Ṭōv ha-Kohen was the predecessor of Hayy b. Qīmoi; the twenty-year period of time listed pertaining to Hayy b. Qīmoi in this part of the Hebrew version (the only one we have) in Nathan the Babylonian's story, is unlikely and it should apparently be corrected to two years.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ Hillai b. Naṭrūnai: Sherira, *Letter*, 116; Ibn Da'ūd, 41, with a distortion, see the editor's note in the English part, 54, to line 119. The Geniza fragment: 46; the query of the people of Qayrawān: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 90 (no. 199), cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 483 n. 29. The matter of the *mezūzā*: *Ōṣar ha-g. to Yōmā*, no. 6. The sale by a woman: see the version in Isaac b. Abbā Mari, *Sefer ha-itt.* (Warsaw), 36c, and cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 560; Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 367ff. *Sefer metivōt*, see the Lewin edition, Jerusalem 1933/4, and see its preface and introduction. Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 203f.; the statements of Isaiah b. Judah: Markon, *Meqōrōt*, 149. See Marx, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 86ff., and see Assaf's critique, *Kiryat sefer*, 11 (1933/5), 163ff.; there he disagrees with Lewin's suggestion about when the book was written; Lewin relied on the fact that the last of the geonim mentioned there is Mattathias; Assaf's argument is that "not having seen it is no proof", because we do not have the complete version of the book. He also has comments about Lewin's statements on a number of details, such as his having interpreted *metivātā* as 'issues', see *ibid.*, 164. See Aptowitz, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/3), 130ff.; among other things he argues against Marx' view that the book was written in Palestine; he also claims there that the *Sefer metivōt* and *Sefer hefeš* are identical. After Hillai b. Naṭrūnai, see Sherira, *Letter*, 116f.; as to Yōm Ṭōv ha-Kohen, I prefer the four years version, not that of ten years or of seven, see the Lewin edition, 117. 'Amram b. Solomon, see Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 78; (starting from 'Amram b. Solomon, the list of the geonim is uncertain, due to the discrepancies between Sherira's *Letter* and Nathan the Babylonian.) Hayy b. Qāyōmā, see *ibid.*, 80. Cf. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 66ff., the Index, with an unlikely assumption according to which the real name of

(205) Now turning to Pumbedita, we find that after Rāvā (Abbā) b. Ami, ISAAC ŠEMAḤ B. PALṬOI B. ABAYĒ became gaon (872-888). There was a fifteen-year gap between the death of his father, Palṭoi Gaon, and the son's rise to the gaonate.

We know his correct name from a letter of ŠemaḤ Sedeq b. Isaac b. Palṭoi b. Isaac ŠemaḤ b. Palṭoi, to Shemariah b. Elḥanan and to his son Elḥanan. This ŠemaḤ Sedeq, Isaac ŠemaḤ's great grandson, was the first gaon of Sura after it turned a new leaf at the end of the tenth century (below, sec. 214). In the letter's address he wrote his name and mentioned his entire lineage, in Arab script. As to the length of his gaonate, Sherira Gaon's *Letter* has contradictory versions—nineteen years and sixteen years—the second of which is apparently the correct one according to the length of times of the geonim in Pumbedita.

The writer of the 953 letter to Spain, mentions (Isaac) ŠemaḤ as having maintained the ties with Spain, that ceased with his death. One may also read in that letter that Judah b. Samuel, i.e., Judah, Sherira Gaon's grandfather, who was gaon of Pumbedita (November 905-February 917), and Mīshoi *alūf* (b. Isaac Šādōq) were his "scribes of the Gate". The chief judge of the Pumbedita Court at the time of the gaonate of Isaac ŠemaḤ, was his son, Ṭōv. We know of his identity from the above letter written by his grandson whose name we do not know with certainty (Naḥshōn[?], see secs. 147, 239), in 953. The writer mentions that the texts from the diasporas were directed to Ṭōv (as a son of a gaon, and also as the chief judge of the yeshiva). Sherira Gaon explicitly mentions in his commentary to *Bāvā Batrā*, what his grandfather Judah had told him regarding the issue that was commented upon "at the *siyūmā* (learning session) of our Lord and Master ŠemaḤ son of our Lord and Master Palṭoi, the geonim". Hayy Gaon mentions in his responsum (regarding four ells of land): "we have the responsum of our Master ŠemaḤ Gaon son of our Master Palṭoi". According to Müller's reckoning, we have twelve responsa ascribed to Isaac ŠemaḤ b. Palṭoi, except for the responsa that it may only be assumed were his.

A number of students, beginning with Rapoport, ascribed the authorship of a first *ʿarūkh*, an alphabetically arranged Talmud dictionary, before that of Nathan b. Yeḥiel, to Isaac ŠemaḤ Gaon. However, Abramson has shown that it is a baseless assumption, moreover, that this *ʿarūkh*, ascribed to Isaac ŠemaḤ Gaon, does not belong to the geonic period.

Succeeding Isaac ŠemaḤ in the Pumbedita gaonate, was HAYY B. DAVID (889-896). His father, apparently, was Davidai *rōsh kallā*, an ancestor of Sherira Gaon, mentioned by Sherira in one of his letters. It appears that Hayy b. David was the writer of a letter sent from the Pumbedita yeshiva at

Yōm Ṭōv ha-Kohen (Ginzberg disregards the 'ha-Kohen') b. Jacob, who is mentioned by Sherira, is Yōm Ṭōv ʿAmram, i.e., we are to believe that Yom Ṭōv ha-Kohen b. Jacob is the ʿAmram b. Solomon in Nathan, and that the name of the father of this compounded man is also compounded: Jacob Solomon! Another view was raised by Poznanski, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/3), 401, that ʿAmram b. Solomon is a distortion, and it should be ʿAmram b. Sheshnā, i.e., the person who was gaon of Sura (861-872); explaining that the early author had before him the initials of the name of ʿAmram's father, *Ḥ. Sh.*, with the *shīn* meaning Solomon (Shelomo). But this view does not pass the chronological test. The opening of the letter of David b. Zakkai: 10. In Sherira's *Letter*, 116, the fact that Jacob b. Naṭrūnai was a *kohen*, has been omitted.

about 850; the sender's name is not preserved, only that of his father, David *rōsh*.... most probably Davidai *rōsh kallā*. Hayy certainly was still a youngster at that time, but already had an important position in the yeshiva. Clearly the gaon was then Paltoi b. Abayē. This letter is of importance regarding the condition of the yeshivot at that time, and I mention it a number of times in this book. Harkavy ascribed the first "book of deeds", preceding that of Saadia Gaon, to Hayy b. David. However, Assaf, who published this book, disputed this assumption, and proved in his introduction that it was written by Hayy b. Sherira.

The transfer of the Pumbedita yeshiva to Baghdad is ascribed to Hayy b. David: "our Lord and Master Hayy Gaon, son of our Lord and Master David, who was a judge in Baghdad many years before he became gaon.... he was the first of the geonim who lived in Baghdad". However, it only says that he lived in Baghdad, not that the yeshiva had moved there, and it may mean that he was the first Baghdadi who became gaon of Pumbedita. In all events, it does not explicitly state that the yeshiva moved from Pumbedita to Baghdad. Moreover, in the letter regarding the condition of the yeshivot that I noted above, and that I ascribe to Hayy b. David, there is the paragraph "in our yeshiva in Frūshābūr" (which is Neharde'a, or al-Anbār, i.e., Pumbedita), but this letter was written a long time before Hayy b. David became gaon, and he was then a resident of Baghdad and the judge there. He certainly endured difficult times of persecution and upheavals, especially in the days of Caliph al-Mutawakkil. At about the middle of Hayy's gaonate, in October 892, al-Mu'taḍid became caliph, and a short while later, after about a month, there was the affair of the attempt to depose Neṭirā from his post, that of the *jahbadh* of the court; Neṭirā was one of the main supporters of the Pumbedita yeshiva (above, sec. 363).²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi, see Sherira, *Letter*, 114: "Our Lord and Master Ṣemaḥ Gaon son of our Lord and Master Paltoi Gaon, who is the father of the father of the mother of the gaon our father", i.e., the great grandfather of the gaon Ḥananiah b. Judah on his mother's side; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40; as to his name, see 45, b, cf. Mann, *HUCA*, 3 (1926), 309. Students who succeeded Mann disregarded this detail. He is the one mentioned also in the *Liqq. ha-pard.* ascribed to Rashi, 9a: "it was asked of Rav Isaac Ṣemaḥ head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* of Pumbedita" etc.; cf. Mann, *JQR*, 11 (1920/21), 444, who had already then assumed that it may be that this was Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi (or Ṣemaḥ b. Kafnai, gaon of Pumbedita, 935-937). The length of time of his gaonate: on this I do not accept Lewin's view, in Sherira, *Letter*, 114, note c, despite what is said in 13, d, lines 4-15, that Paltoi and his son (Isaac) Ṣemaḥ "the two of them were the leaders 40 years". Also see: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 355f.; *Ōsar ha-g. to Bāwā qammā*, 134 (no. 85). See mentions of him, 13, d, line 8; e, line 12. Mišhoi *aluf* b. Isaac Ṣādōq is mentioned in 26, line 1. Tōv the chief judge: 13, d, lines 18-19: "Tōv Chief Judge of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, who was my father's (!) father". The *siyūmā* of Ṣemaḥ Gaon: Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 204; cf. *Ōsar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, 128; the responsum of Hayy Gaon, Harkavy, *Resp.*, 140; *Ōsar ha-g. to Qiddūshin*, 64f. (no. 158). See Müller, *Maṭteah*, 140. Since Müller's time more responsa under his name were edited, see Lewin, *Ginzē q.* 5 (1933/4), 72f.; Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 1, 76ff.; 185ff., 204; *Ōsar ha-g. to Yevāmōt*, 17 nn. f, g. The *ʿArūkh*, see Sherira, *Letter*, 114, note b. of Lewin, with more references. See Abramson, *Sinai*, 95 (1983/4), 28f.; also see his comments in *Perāqīm mi-mevō' ha-talmūd* that he edited, 134 n. 5. Hayy b. David: Sherira, *Letter*, 114: he was gaon *shivshenē u-falgā*, i.e., seven-and-one-half-years; Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 40. See his letter, 4 and the preamble to this letter; see 28, x, line 19 (letter of Sherira Gaon): "our grandfather, our Master David[ai] *rōsh kallā*". Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 9-16, deals at length with 4, ascribing it to the (assumed) son of David b. Judah, who was exilarch in the first half of the ninth century. *Sefer ha-sheṭārōt*: Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 64f.; Assaf, *S. ha-sheṭārōt* of Hayy Gaon in the introduction, 7f. He lived in Baghdad: Ibn Ghayyāth,

(206) QĪMOI HA-KOHEN B. AḤA B. RAVREVAY (OR RAV RABBI), became gaon of Pumbedita in 896, and served in the post for eight-and-a-half years, until 905. He was the son of Aḥa ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay, gaon of Pumbedita in 858, i.e., thirty-eight years earlier. The writer of the letter sent from the Pumbedita yeshiva (apparently Hayy b. David, at about 850) mentions him among the *alūfīm* of Pumbedita. In an anonymous halachic text with a discussion regarding the parchment upon which to write a Torah scroll, there is a responsum of "our Lord and Master Qīmoi", but this may be Qīmoi b. Ashī, Sura gaon (816-820). There is in the Geniza a fragment of a responsum: "These are the queries submitted to us, at the court of the yeshiva of our Lord and Master Qīmoi Gaon, son of our Master Aḥī Gaon".

The following gaon was Sherira Gaon's grandfather: "our Lord and Master JUDAH, THE FATHER OF OUR FATHER, SON OF OUR LORD AND MASTER SAMUEL *rōsh kallā*". He was appointed "at the beginning of the year (Sel.) 1217", meaning, apparently, that he was actually appointed on Rosh Hashana, i.e., 2 September, 905. His gaonate lasted until Adar, 1228, February 917. Judah b. Samuel was, as we have seen, "scribe at the Gate", i.e., the scribe of the yeshiva court at the time of Isaac Ṣemaḥ, and was his son-in-law, i.e., his wife (Sherira Gaon's grandmother) was the daughter of the gaon Isaac Ṣemaḥ: "and he (Isaac Ṣemaḥ) was the father of the mother of the gaon our father", Sherira writes in his *Letter*; however, there is also another version, and actually in the better manuscript, MS Ḥalab: "the father of his father's mother", i.e., it may be that he married the above gaon's granddaughter. A copy of a query sent to Judah has been preserved: "Judah head of the yeshiva, may the Merciful guard him". Saadia b. Joseph had correspondence with Judah Gaon when he stayed in Palestine: "... one of the queries asked by our Lord and Master Saadia Gaon while still in Palestine before he arrived in Babylonia of our Lord and Master Judah Gaon, our grandfather" (stated by Sherira). And Hayy Gaon writes: "This is the way we were instructed, in the name of somebody who received (this tradition) from our Master Judah Gaon, who received it from his father, our Master Samuel".

It is Judah Gaon who began the controversy with the exilarch ʿUqba about the Khurāsān authority, apparently shortly after he became gaon. I have described this controversy, as well as those who became involved in it (above, secs. 137-141). His ties with Khurāsān are mentioned by his great grandson, Hayy Gaon, when writing about the Khurāsān custom "to consecrate (a marriage) with a ring during the party, and our (great) grandfather, our Lord and Master Judah Gaon, ruled for them that they only consecrate (a marriage) by the Babylonian custom, with a *ketubbā*, signed by witnesses".

MEVASSER HA-KOHEN B. QĪMOI GAON, was appointed after the death of Judah b. Samuel, i.e., at the beginning of 917, and served as gaon until his death, in November or December 922. At the same time that the yeshiva scholars appointed Mevasser, the exilarch David b. Zakkai appointed KOHEN ṢEDEQ B. JOSEPH, and the controversy in Pumbedita began that lasted until September 922, when the vying factions were reconciled.

Sha'arē s., I, 63; cf. Derenbourg, *Zeitschr. f. jüd. Theol.*, 5 (1844), 398; Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 435, n. 2.

Mevasser Gaon died shortly afterwards. As to Kohen Šedeq, he died in 935, apparently at the beginning of the summer (see above, the chapter about the controversy, secs. 136-147). We have information about the ties Kohen Šedeq had with the communities of Spain. Some of his responsa have been preserved, such as regarding the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippūr prayers; regarding the blessings on the *maššā* and wine; regarding sending a letter via a gentile (permissible, if he received payment); regarding the writing of the phylacteries; regarding circumcision; regarding milking she-goats on the Sabbath.²⁰⁶

(207) In those two generations I have been describing, from the 870s to the 930s, it appears that the activities of the yeshivot became concentrated more and more in Baghdad. We have seen (above, sec. 205) the information concerning Hayy b. David, of whom it was said that he was the first of the geonim to reside in Baghdad. True, it is not said here explicitly that the Pumbedita yeshiva left its place and moved to Baghdad, but the permanent residence of the Pumbedita gaon in Baghdad is mentioned in Nathan the Babylonian's story, when Nīṣī al-Nahrwānī endeavored to reach the Pumbedita gaon, Judah b. Samuel, to attain his approval for the new exilarch, David b. Zakkai, and succeeded in arriving at his house in Baghdad, so it is implied. The enclosure ʿAtīqa in Babylon (i.e., Baghdad) is the place where "the two heads of the yeshivot assembled with the exilarch", also according to Nathan the Babylonian. From Nathan the Babylonian's text in that same place it is implied that Sura was still in its

²⁰⁶ Qīmoi ha-Kohen b. Aḥa: Sherira, *Letter*, 119; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 42. See 4, b, line 6. Qīmoi, regarding the parchment, see the citations in Adler, *JQR*, 9 (1897), 684, 688; cf. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 104 n. 1, who deliberates about the names Qāyōmā, Qīmoi; to me it seems that they are the same, the one according to Aramaic, the other along the line of the Persian names (perhaps: Qīmawayh). See the explicit reference: TS 10 G 5, f. 1, in Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 462. Cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 9f.; his doubts there do not seem founded: the writer of 4, mentions Aḥa among the *aliūfīm* of Pumbedita, and also his son Qīmoi, something which is unusual; but, as I have noted (above, sec. 201), he should not be held strictly to account and his information should not be discounted. Judah b. Samuel: Sherira, *Letter*, 119, and see there Lewin's proofs (in note d) that the name of Judah's father was indeed Samuel. "Scribe of the Gate": 13, e, lines 15-16; the marriage: Sherira, *ibid.*, 114; cf. Rosenthal, *Shenāṭōn* 11-12 (1985/6), 596. The query: TS 10 G 5, f. 2, see Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 145f. Saadia's query: MS Strasbourg, Cat. Wickersheimer no. 4038, f. 6v, lines 9-12, in Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 248; cf. *ibid.*, 238f.; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 74. Hayy's comments: *Ōṣar ha-g.* to *Bāwā qammā*, 7 (no. 24). The matter of Khurāsān: *Ōṣar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 18 (no. 60), and see Assaf, *Madde'e ha-yahadūt*, 2 (1926/7), 107 (no. 113), with another version: "a few years more than 100 years", i.e., Hayy gaon, writing in the eleventh century, means the time of his great grandfather, Judah Gaon. (See this version also in *Ōṣar ha-g.* to *Qiddūshin*, 133 [no. 301].) Mevasser Gaon: Sherira, *Letter*, 119f.; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 42; see the matter of the controversy in the Pumbedita yeshiva and the calendar controversy, above, sec. 142; the version of the year of his death in Sherira's *Letter*, Sel. 1234, is to be preferred over 1237; Saadia b. Joseph writes in his third letter (7, a, lines 11-12) about "the head of the yeshiva" (in the singular), on 3 January 923, while in his earlier letters he used the plural (i.e., Mevasser and Kohen Šedeq). Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph: Sherira, *ibid.*, 119f.; following the date there in the continuation (the gaonate of Šemaḥ b. Kafnai) the version Sel. 1246, as the year of his death, should be preferred over 1247; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 43. Kohen Šedeq's ties with the Spanish communities: 13, e, lines 18-19. The responsa of Kohen Šedeq: *Ōṣar ha-g.* to *Berākhōt*, I, nos. 53, 220, 221, 247, 338, where his responsa collection is mentioned: "this is what we have found in the queries to our Lord and Master Kohen Šedeq", *ibid.*, to *Shabbāt*, I, nos. 37, 249, 383, 443.

place, because its people go from there to Baghdad to participate in the celebration of the appointment of the exilarch.

It appears that the Jews of Baghdad, relatively speaking, often worried about the unruly crowd and even suffered from actual violence, as we see, for example (below, sec. 363) in the episode regarding Neṭīrā. Especially harsh events took place in the 870s, during the gaonates of Naḥshōn b. Isaac Ṣādōq in Sura, and Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Palṭoi, in Pumbedita, during the civil war in Iraq, the Zanji revolt. This was a revolt of masses of slaves of African origin, along with Bedouin tribes, under leaders with extreme Shiite views. Their main efforts were concentrated in southern Iraq, around Wāsiṭ and Baṣra. Though the sources do not specifically mention the fate of the Jews, it may be assumed that a horrendous event, such as the slaughter of the population of Baṣra, also affected the Jews, because Baṣra had a large Jewish population. According to the description preserved in Ṭabarī, the Zanjis attacked from three directions and deployed all over Baṣra on a Friday morning, thirteen days before the end of the Muslim month of Shawwāl, AH 257 (7 September 871). The main slaughter, looting and torching, was done on the following Monday, when the Zanji armies murdered as many inhabitants of the city as they could.

From this period we have information about severe plagues in the areas of the eastern countries of the caliphate. There was a harsh plague in Khurāsān in 264, i.e., AD 879/80, when many people died. In 912/13 a plague struck Baghdad (AH 300). In Rabīʿ I 308 (beginning on 21 June 920) there was a great fire in the Karkh, a quarter inhabited by many Baghdad Jews, and many perished. In the following summer, 921, widespread rioting ensued in Baghdad, which some writers of the generation considered the beginning of the Abbasid decline. According to Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, the bloodshed began in Baghdad on 24 Dhū'l-qa'da 308, 6 April 921. The immediate cause was the tax policy of the vizier Ḥāmid ibn al-ʿAbbās (below, sec. 361), that led to a rise in prices and severe economic hardship for the masses. An expression of the hardship was the uprising of the people of Qaṣr (the seat of the exilarch, Qaṣr Ibn Hubayra), on 9 Ramaḍān 316, i.e., 26 October 928. They descended upon Baghdad en masse, rioted in the markets and prevented the shops from opening. The Baghdad 'rabble' joined them and together, they looted and wreaked havoc, among other things, burning a government office's account books. The authorities used a she-elephant they had (apparently for policing purposes) in their attempt to disperse them, but to no avail, because she was starved and weak.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Nathan the Babylonian, see the original Arabic version: 12, I, b, lines 17-21; cf. Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 78; Mann, *REJ*, 73 (1922), 109; the slaughter in Baṣra: Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1852-1856; and see on Ubulla (which is Hūvlāt): Dhahabī, *al-ʿAyn*, MS Bodl Digby Or 15, f. 82a: the Zanjis torched this port city and killed more than 2,000 people. The plague in Khurāsān: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 321 (and he adds: in Qūmis, as well); Ibn Taghrī Bardī, under the year 300 (III, 180). The fire in the Karkh: Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid.*, VIII, 129. Riots in Baghdad: Ḥamza al-Isfahānī (1844 ed.), 201ff; Dhahabī, *ibid.*, fol. 100b; cf. Bowen, *Life*, 179f. Uprising in Qaṣr: Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, *ibid.*, 132f.

7. Jewish personalities in the ninth century

(208) Among the Jewish personalities in that period one should mention DAVID B. MARWĀN AL-MUQAMMIŠ, of Raqqa, also known as al-Shīrazī, and also as the Babylonian. Qirqisānī, writing a generation after Ibn al-Muqammiš, mentions him noting some details about him. According to him, he was a Jewish philosopher who converted to Christianity in Nisibis, under the influence of an accomplished philosopher, a Christian notable who was also a physician, by the name of Nānā. David, his student for many years, delved into philosophy, but eventually abandoned Christianity and even wrote two famous books against it. Based on the books of the Christians and their commentaries, he wrote a commentary to Genesis (*kitāb al-khalīqa*, book of the creation) and a commentary of Ecclesiastes. Qirqisānī even presents, in Ibn al-Muqammiš' name, statements about Christianity, like about its religious law, about the Council of Nicaea, and about Arius (who claimed that the messiah was not part of the divinity, but was created). He even proved that the *qar'īyya* sect and the Sadducees preceded the Christians (and not the opposite, that the Christians preceded them). Ibn Ḥazm also mentions Ibn al-Muqammiš, and in a strange way, claiming that Ibn al-Muqammiš was one of those who believed that God kills a person when still a child, if he is destined to sin, thus apparently meaning the *mu'tazilīs*.

Nānā, Ibn al-Muqammiš' teacher, is none other than Nonus of Nisibis, archdeacon, commentator and polemicist, who wrote in Syriac as well as in Arabic, spearheaded the Ya'qubite Church propaganda, especially against the Malikī Abū Qurra, and frequented the Armenian princes' court. Nonus flourished around 840, a reference point through which we can estimate the time of Ibn al-Muqammiš, who, as noted, was Nonus' student. Ibn al-Muqammiš' polemics against Ibn al-Rāwandī, show that he was apparently writing in the last quarter of the ninth century. Schreiner, writing about Ibn al-Muqammiš in 1895, showed that he was under the influence of the *mu'tazilīs*, and that he believed in the *ʿadl* and the *tawḥīd*, divine justice and the unity of God; Schreiner based it on part of the book by Ibn al-Muqammiš that Judah b. Barzilai included in his commentary on *Sefer ha-yešārā*. Steinschneider and others believed his name should be pronounced: al-Miqmaš, but al-Muqammiš, the meaning of which was not clear for the students, is correct; some believed it might derive from *qamīš*, a shirt, i.e., it might be: the dresser, or a shirt maker or someone who deals with shirts; yet the name clearly means a fuller, a launderer and shrinker and bleacher of linen (below, sec. 335, note); in all events it was the nickname of his father, Marwān. Steinschneider, followed by Goldziher, thought that Ibn al-Muqammiš was none other than David b. Mūsaj, a figure that will be discussed below (sec. 240). Ibn al-Muqammiš, as noted, wrote a number of commentaries of biblical books; he wrote a book called *kitāb al-ḡarā'a*, the book of tenacity, devotion, with a survey of Christianity; the book of the logical answer about the beliefs of the Christians; a book of answers about the views of the Buddhists; a book surveying all kinds of views in the field of religion; a book on the principles of religion; and a book about the unity of God. The most important of his books, apparently, most of which has been preserved, is the *ʿishrūn maqāla*, twenty treatises. There is in it

obviously a strong Christian influence, or at least reference to Christian views. As mentioned above, Judah b. Barzilai of Barcelona considered chapter sixteen suitable for inclusion in his commentary on *Sefer ha-yeširā*, perhaps because of the subject it deals with: divine justice, and how God is concerned with people receiving reward or punishment.

There were students who sought to place Ibn al-Muqammiš with the Karaites, especially because of the place of honor Qirqisānī gives him. It should be borne in mind that the Karaite sect was only then developing, and its adherents used strong polemics and even sharp propaganda to support their views. If Ibn al-Muqammiš was a Karaite in such a period, it would have been impossible for him to refrain in his writings from expressing arguments close to the Karaite. The fact that there is not even a hint of Karaism there is enough to eliminate the possibility, and if there was indeed a period of his life when he was a Christian, he returned to the rabbinical Jewish fold and sought to vindicate it with the philosophical arguments based on analogy and logic that he learned from his teacher Nonus.²⁰⁸

(209) The end of the ninth century, in the time of the vizier ʿAbdallāh b. Sulaymān (891-910), was when HARŪN B. AL-ḤĀʾIK (=son of the weaver), one of the most important Arabic grammarians, of Jewish origin, and from Hīra, flourished. He composed a number of books on Arabic grammar, and died apparently in AH 300, AD 913.

Before the year 300, i.e., from the ninth century until the beginning of the tenth century, "Abū Daʿūd the Jew, the Iraqi astrologer", lived in Baghdad. This was apparently ABŪ DAʿŪD SULAYMĀN B. ʾISMA, originally from Samarkand, who engaged in mathematics and astronomy.

As we have seen (above, in the chapter on the Karaites), in these generations the Karaite sect developed and there was a blending of them and the *nesī'im* of the house of ʿAnan. Some of the personalities worthy of being considered the pioneers of Karaism flourished at this time. The most prominent of them, with the exception of the founders, about whom I have written in the chapter on the Karaites, was ABŪ YŪSUF YAʿQŪB B. IŠḤĀQ B. SAMʿAWAYH AL-QIRQISĀNĪ; i.e., the family originated in Qarqisiya (ancient Carchemish) on the left bank of the Euphrates river, north of Raḥba. Qirqisānī wrote commentaries on parts of the Bible, *al-riyāḍ wa'l-ḥadā'iq* (the garden-beds and the orchards), including a commentary on the Book of Genesis, that has been preserved. His most famous and important book is

²⁰⁸ Ibn al-Muqammiš, see Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 41f., 44, 47. Ibn Ḥazm, *Milal*, III, 171. On Nonus see Graf, *GCAL*, II, 226f. See Schreiner, *Kalam*, 22ff.; Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 37; Goldziher, *REJ*, 47 (1903), 41ff.; Poznanski, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 259; Poznanski is the one who showed that the identification of Ibn al-Muqammiš with David b. Mūsaj is unlikely. Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 187, was the first one who cited Ibn Ḥazm and showed the correct reading of the distorted version. Also see Hirschfeld, *JQR*, *ibid.*, 447, who believed that it should be pronounced: al-Muqammas; Mann, *HUCA*, 12-13 (1937/8), 417f.; Vajda, *SI*, 11 (1959), 31ff., translated into French the 16th treatise of the *kitāb al-maqālāt*, that was preserved by Judah b. Barzilai of Barcelona in his commentary to *Sefer ha-yeširā*, and discussed the matters of Ibn al-Muqammiš in a number of articles. He dealt with the eighth *maqāla*, see in Altmann (ed.), *Jew. Med. and Renaiss. St.*, 49; see also *idem*, *Oriens*, 15:61, 1962, where he uses his polemic with Ibn al-Rāwandī as a basis for determining the assumed time of Ibn al-Muqammiš' life. He also describes there the condition of the parts of his book that were preserved. See his book *ʿishrūn maqāla* edited by Sarah Stroumsa (Leiden 1989), with a list of his works on pp. 20-23 and a description of the book on pp. 23-33.

al-anwār wa'l-marāqib (the lights and towers), that has been published in its entirety. Even though written in Judeo-Arabic, i.e., in Hebrew script, its editor, L. Nemoy, painstakingly copied it into Arab script. It contains thirteen treatises: (1) history of the Jewish sects; (2) the validity of logical inquiry in the knowledge of the religions and their laws; (3) polemic regarding religions and sects; (4) methods by which the laws may be interpreted; (5) circumcision and the Sabbath; (6) precepts except for the Sabbath, including a treatise on cultic practice; (7) the new moons; (8) the festival of *Shāwū'ot*; (9) other holidays; (10) purity and impurity; (11) laws of forbidden marriages; (12) law regarding comestibles; (13) inheritances. Qirqisānī mentions in *al-anwār* a number of his other treatises: the commentaries on Genesis, Job, and Ecclesiastes; on the negation of Muḥammad's prophecy; on the art of commentary; on the unity of God. Qirqisānī was an outstanding figure in the breath of his knowledge and the depth with which he dealt with the subjects he wrote about, and his book *al-anwār* is the main source of our knowledge about the Jewish sectaries and especially about early Karaism. Qirqisānī wrote this book in AH 315, i.e., AD 927/8.

Mas'ūdī, who flourished in the first half of the tenth century, mentions a number of Jewish figures whom he knew or knew of. Among them was the Baghdadian JOSEPH B. QĀYŌMĀ, a *mutakallim*, i.e., he engaged in the study of religious issues, about whom we have no other details. Likewise, YA'QŪB B. MARDAWAYH. He also mentions IBN ABĪ AL-THANĀ' JUDAH B. JOSEPH, who, according to him, was a student of the Harrānī scholar Thābit Ibn Qurra (836-891), with whom he studied philosophy and medicine, in Raqqa; he was apparently a contemporary and fellow-countryman of David b. Marwān al-Muqammiṣ. He also mentions an adversary of this Judah, SA'ID B. 'ALĪ, known by his nickname, Ibn Ashlamīyā. Judah b. Joseph is mentioned by Qirqisānī in a fragment at the end of his Torah commentary: "Indeed, I admire Judah b. Joseph al-Raqqī, known as Ibn al-Balashāyā" (in Mas'ūdī: Ibn Abī al-Thanā'; the identity between the two is somewhat doubtful). Qirqisānī expresses amazement about him, because he was not critical enough on the issue of the Rabbanite date calculation. Thus one may assume that Judah b. Joseph was a Karaite.

Another Karaite personality was IBN SAQAWAYH. According to Ibn al-Hītī, he argued with the Rabbanites and with al-Fayyūmī (i.e., Saadia Gaon), about the new moon, the spring, *Shāwū'ot*, the sheep's tail, the fat, and the Oral Law, and showed that the Rabbinical tradition was worthless. Saadia Gaon wrote a tract in response against him, "the response against Ibn Saqawayh".

Ibn al-Hītī also mentions that the "Master ABŪ 'ANAN ISAAC B. 'ALĪ B. ISAAC was a great authority. He wrote a response against (Saadia) al-Fayyūmī, in a book that is like *ha-mā'or* (the light; of Joseph al-Baṣīr) and he has a book on the "Correct Blending" (the *symmetria*). Obviously, he was one of the leaders of science and one of the great authorities". It should be assumed that the reference is to the physician Isaac b. 'Alī al-Ruhāwī (i.e., of Ruhā, which is Edessa, Urfa), who lived at that time, who wrote a treatise regarding the physicians' rules of behavior, *adab al-tabīb*. There the author is called: "Iṣḥāq b. 'Alī al-Yahūdī", which contradicts Steinschneider's view that he was a Christian. The identification with Isaac

b. ⁶Alī the Karaite is also supported by the content of the above-mentioned *adab al-ṭabīb* treatise, which deals with *ītidāl* and, as Ibn al-Hītī has noted—above—he wrote a book about this subject (*symmetria*, moderation, unity of body and soul).²⁰⁹

8. Saadia Gaon; Sura's decline

(210) After mentioning Yōm Ṭōv Kahanā's appointment as Sura gaon, even though he "was a weaver", and after (apparently) skipping over Hayy b. Qāyōmā who is mentioned by Nathan the Babylonian, Sherira Gaon writes that the scholars of the generation wanted to close down the Sura yeshiva and transfer its remaining scholars to Pumbedita. Nevertheless, in the end they agreed to appoint "Nathan *alūf*, the brother of our father, son of Judah Gaon, our grandfather", so as not to obliterate the name of Sura. However, this Nathan *alūf*, Sherira's uncle, died before they managed to appoint him. Then, Sherira continues, exilarch David b. Zakkai invited SAADIA B. JOSEPH, even though he was not one of the scholars of the yeshiva, but from Egypt, known by his nickname, al-Fayyūmī. I have already presented (above, sec. 144) Nathan the Babylonian's version of the appointment affair.

Following the *Book of Tradition* of Ibn Da'ūd, it was believed that Saadia was born in 892, for it states: "R. Saadia Gaon died in (AM) 4702, at the age of fifty, from the black bile". I.e., he died in 942, thus he was born allegedly in 892. Yet two almost identical Geniza fragments, remnants of the *fihris*t, the list of the writings of their father that Saadia's sons She'ērīt and Dōsā wrote at the beginning of 953, contain different

²⁰⁹ Hārūn b. al-Hā'ik: Ibn al-Nadīm, 75. Šafadī, *Nakṭ*, 302; Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 142 (with more references). Abū Da'ūd: Ibn al-Nadīm, 278; Bīrūnī, *Qānūn*, 654; Ibn al-Qiftī, 407, cf. Sezgin, *ibid.*, V, 337f.; VI, 170f., with more references. See the summary of the details known about Qirqisānī: Chiesa and Lockwood, 16, 34 n. 8; see the article 'Qarkisiyā' in *EF*² (by M. Streck); also see Hirschfeld, *Qirqisānī St.*, 6ff., 59; *ibid.*, 39-59, he published part of the commentary to Genesis; see Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 191f., who mentioned the commentary to Genesis and the *Uṣūl al-dīn* ("principles of religion") and thought they were one and the same. Scheiber, *JJS*, 22 (1971), 70 notes that the Genesis commentary was copied by Joseph b. Jacob the Babylonian. See Neubauer, *MGWJ*, 82 (1938), 324, 404 with, among other things, a discussion comparing Salmōn b. Yerūhim and Qirqisānī (the similarities and differences in the works of the two of them). The time *al-Anwār* was written: Ibn al-Hītī, 432, where the Sel. date should be corrected, and it should be 1230. Joseph b. Qāyōmā, Ya'qūb b. Mardawaih: Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 114; Judah b. Joseph, etc., *ibid.*, 113. See the Qirqisānī fragment in Neubauer, *Med. Jew. Chron.*, II, 250, and the remarks of the editor, following Harkavy; cf. Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 36f. (no. 24); Wolfson, *Philosophy*, 89f. Ibn Saqawaih: Ibn al-Hītī, 435; Saadia's tract against Ibn Saqawaih: MS Antonin 204, which is a fragment from this tract, see Harkavy, *Hagedem*, 1 (1906/7), 64f. Poznanski, *JQR*, 10 (1898), 252f.; in TS Ar. Box 51, f. 36, which is a sheet from a halachic book in Arabic, lines 1-5, an opinion of Saadia Gaon is quoted, from that tract. Isaac b. ⁶Alī, see Ibn al-Hītī, 435, and see the editor's view *ibid.*, 442 n. 4; see Poznanski, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 264 who cites a Geniza fragment edited by Harkavy, which mentions whom Poznanski believed to be the father of the Isaac mentioned here, ⁶Alī b. Ishāq, who rejected the system of setting two days for the first of the month. From this Poznanski concludes that the time of Isaac b. ⁶Alī was around 950, but it seems to me that he flourished somewhat earlier than that. Steinschneider's view: *Ar. Übersetz.*, 31. See Sezgin, *GAS*, III, 263f., who notes that the names of four more medical books that he wrote are known, especially the book on Galenus; see Bürgel, *ZDMG*, 117:90, 1967.

information, which is, of course, correct. It says there that Saadia lived less than sixty years and died on "Monday night.... on the twenty sixth of the month of Iyar of the year (Sel) 1253", i.e., 17 May 942. Thus, he was born ten years earlier than the previously accepted view, i.e., in 882.

Saadia Gaon was born in Fayyūm, i.e., in central Egypt, in a locality called Dilāz. In the Geniza, the locality is written in a number of forms: Dilāš, Dalīs, Dalāš; in Coptic: Tiloj, which in ancient times was Neiloupolis, which had then a significant Jewish population. Sometimes Saadia is called al-Fayyūmī, and sometimes also al-Dilāšī. At the time of the great controversy between him and Khalaf b. Sarjāda, we find deprecatory statements: "... b. Fayyūmī the Dilāšī who we have learned from clear and indisputable witnesses that his father would strike a hammer in the land of Egypt in idol-worship and ate broth of abominable things and was forced out of Egypt and died in Jaffa"; proselyte origins were also ascribed to him. Explanations were sought for these statements, such as the different vocations ascribed to his father: butcher, barber, physician, *mu'adhdhin* (muezzin, announcer of prayer), and, of course, one may assume: a Christian, who announced the time of prayers by banging with the *nāqūs*. Saadia, on the other hand (at least according to his adversaries), would claim lineage from Shela b. Judah, only in his last years, i.e., during the controversy; he claimed that he did not previously make his lineage public because he had no need to do so. He also claimed lineage from Ḥanīna b. Dōšā, and even named one of his two sons Dōsā.

It would appear that Saadia b. Joseph was famous when still in Egypt. He grew up when the Tulunids ruled that country, and when there was no dependence on the rulers in Baghdad, the Abbasids. We have seen (above, sec. 206) that Saadia maintained ties with the gaon of Pumbedita, Judah b. Samuel (905-917). He also had ties with Isaac b. Solomon al-Isrā'īlī, according to Dūnash b. Tamīm, as I have already mentioned (above, sec. 118), pertaining, of course, to the time that Saadia was still in Egypt. Dūnash b. Tamīm boasts there, in the continuation, that al-Isrā'īlī would seek his counsel before sending his responses to Saadia. Even if exaggerating, there is still some evidence of the esteem al-Isrā'īlī had for Saadia, by being as punctilious as possible in his answers to the latter's letter.

Saadia left Egypt, heading east, first to Palestine. We have no information about precisely when he left Egypt, but we do know that it took place before 915, because in a letter he wrote from Fustat, apparently in December 921, he mentions that from the summer of 915 he had not received any letter from the addressees, i.e., the three sons of 'Alī b. Salīm: "it has been six-and-a-half-years and not a single copied letter (*patshegen*, Esther 3:14), or a sheet has arrived to me from you". He may have already left in the summer of 906, after the victory of the Abbasid armies, which reinstated Baghdad's rule in Egypt for the next thirty years, and when it may have been more convenient for an Egyptian to cross the borders on his way to Baghdad. Saadia had a prolonged stay, one which cannot be determined, in Palestine, about which we draw our main information from an Arabic source: according to al-Mas'ūdī, a contemporary of his, Saadia sojourned in Tiberias, in the company of Abū Kathīr Yaḥyā b. Zakariyyā, *al-kātib al ṭabarānī*, the Tiberian scribe (or: official). We may nevertheless assume that Saadia arrived in Palestine before 917, for on the aforemen-

tioned query that he asked of the gaon of Pumbedita, Judah b. Samuel, it states that he was asked by "our Lord and Master Saadia Gaon while he was still in Palestine"; and Judah Gaon died in February 917.

In a letter that Saadia wrote in February or March 922, to his students in Fustat, he noted "that in the last summer, when I was in Ḥalab, I heard...", i.e., on his way to Baghdad, he stopped in Ḥalab, in the summer of 921. On his history at the outset of his arrival in Baghdad, and the central role he played in the struggle against the Palestinian gaon and his son on the calendar controversy, I have written in my books on Palestine and also in this book, and as a matter of course about his other controversies after he was appointed gaon of Sura (above, secs. 144-145). From his letters one gets the impression that most of the time he spent in Baghdad, not in Sura itself, but from this one should not gather that the yeshiva itself had already been transferred to Baghdad, like the Pumbedita yeshiva, or that it had remained in Sura, i.e., Mātā Maḥsiya. Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, speaking of Sura when it was closed, says: "until this year, there is no yeshiva in Maḥsiya" (in 987, when the *Letter* was written, the yeshiva was supposed to be in Sura; let alone in Saadia's time). Yet in his letter to Fustat, when he was appointed gaon, Saadia writes: "receive *shālōm* from me and from the *alūfīm* and from She'ērīt our son and from all the scholars of the yeshiva, and the permanent teachers in the house of our Master and the important householders and dignitaries in Baghdad, in which we live by the mercy of God, our fortress". I.e., on the one hand he mentions "the house of our Master", which is the synagogue in Sura, and on the other hand he notes that he is among the residents of Baghdad.

In the opening preamble to the *fihrist*, that was written by his sons, She'ērīt and Dōsā, that I have mentioned above, they note, as was stated, the date of his death, the 26th of Iyar Sel. 1253, i.e., 17 May 942. According to them he died after serving as gaon fourteen years less four days, which means that he was appointed four days before the 26th of Iyar, the 22nd of Iyar in the year Sel. 1299; this was Thursday, 15 May 928. In the summer of 921 he arrived in Baghdad when he was thirty-nine. In the *Sefer ha-galui*, when writing about the precedents of writing Hebrew books in the biblical style, he says: "as I have written a book in Hebrew while I stayed in Iraq". From here Harkavy sought to conclude that his stay in Baghdad during the calendar controversy was only as a visit, and after the controversy abated, he left Iraq and later returned to settle there. However, it seems to me that the above statement is not sufficient proof for this conclusion.

After his appointment as gaon, Saadia had two years of peace before the controversy broke out between him and David b. Zakkai, which lasted until 17 February 937. Thus it appears that he had a total of only seven years of actual activity in Sura, two of them at the beginning, and five years until his death. Between 930 and 937, the geonim in Pumbedita were Kohen Sēdeq b. Joseph, then Šemah b. Kafnai, and one may assume that Pumbedita's strength and importance rose significantly vis-à-vis Sura. Especially active was Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (Ibn Sarjāda); though not yet gaon, he played a central role in Pumbedita, and not for nothing did Saadia accuse him in the *Sefer ha-galui* of appointing a judge in Mosul (Ephraim bar

Saṭyā) and a judge, al-Sabbāk, in Ahwāz; it is unlikely that these cities had previously been within the jurisdiction of Pumbedita.

Saadia usually signs his name: Saadia b. Joseph *alūf*, *yeshū'ā*. In the above letter to the sons of 'Alī b. Salīm he calls himself (in Arabic script): Sa'īd b. Yūsuf *ra's al-kull*, i.e., *rōsh kallā* (not *rās al-khāl*, as read by Mann). As to *yeshū'ā*, it was his *'alāma*, i.e., the personal formula with which he signed his letters, and not as assumed by Malter—a title he granted himself: Master of Salvation; Mann has already explained it in an article he published in 1922. Mann believed that the title *alūf*, even though following the name of his father, Joseph, was Saadia's title, and that the Pumbedita yeshiva had granted it (thus in an article he published in 1925); in this he followed Poznanski, and it was also Bornstein's view. However, the fact is that this was his father's title, because this was the custom and that is how it should be understood when a title (whichever title) was attached to the father's name. Indeed, we only have pejorative statements regarding Joseph, Saadia's father (as I have mentioned above), and we do not know whether he was one of the scholars connected with the Babylonian yeshivot, but his son's signature proved that he was indeed one of them. Saadia, himself, had apparently received the title later, not long before being appointed gaon of Sura. Actually, only in his treatise against Hīwī ha-Balkhī do we find him calling himself *Sa'īd rōsh kallā*, *Sa'īd alūf* (using a 'left' *shīn* instead of a *samekh*), in the acrostics. Davidson saw this as proof that Saadia really meant himself and not his father, even when the title is attached to the latter, but he was wrong. Because, as stated, they were both *alūfim* (or *rāshē kallā*, they are synonyms), and Saadia, the son, was granted the title later, a few years before his appointment as gaon.

Saadia had two sons, She'ērīt, the elder, and Dōsā. Dōsā became gaon in Sura, and I will be discussing him (below, sec. 221). It appears that She'ērīt died much earlier. Unlike the view of Malter, who believed that the name She'ērīt does not appear in the Jewish sources, it may be found, though apparently rare, in those generations, as can be seen in the Geniza, including a letter beginning with the name of the sender: "*khādīmuḥu* (=your servant) She'ērīt", written to a certain Abraham *ha-talmīd*. "Eleazar bar She'ērīt, of blessed memory", was among the witnesses who signed a thirteenth century deed. In a memorial list one R. She'ērīt is mentioned. In a Fustat deed from Sunday, 24 Tamuz Sel. 1439, 24 June 1128, the husband is She'ērīt bar Ḥalfon.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ See Sherira, *Letter*, 117; Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 80. See Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 41, and see the Geniza fragments: 9; cf. Mann, *JQR*, 11 (1920/21), 423ff. and also Malter, *Saadia*, 421. The time of Saadia Gaon's death is also mentioned by Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 112f.: after the year 330 (ending on 14 September 942. It may be that the word 'after' which he uses is superfluous, being a distortion of the copyist). Neiloupolis, see Herodotus, I, 85; on Dilāz: Grohmann, *Studien*, 37f.; Golb, *JNES*, 33 (1974), 125f.; Timm, *Christl.-kopt. Äg.*, 1763f. The son of Fayyūmī al-Dilāšī, etc., see the letter of Aaron b. Meir, in Schechter, *Saadyana*, 20, and also in Bornstein, *Sokolow Jub. Vol.*, 104; see there note 5; also see in Harkavy, *Zikk. la-rish*, V, 229: "because he is a descendant of proselytes and not of Jewish stock.... everyone will testify that he is the descendant of proselytes and that his ancestors were circumcised and immersed" (including correct additions of Harkavy). See the commentaries in Eppenstein, *Beiträge* (reprint), 127ff.; Saadia's own reference to his genealogy: Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 42: "of the descendants of Shela b Judah from the stock of R. Ḥanīnā b. Dōsā". Also cf. Harkavy, *ibid.*, 165ff.; Ḥanīnā b. Dōsā: Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 3 (1931/2), 152 (his remark concerning BL Or 5557

(211) We may therefore assume that Saadia was a son of a family of scholars, one of the 'Babylonians' in Egypt, for it was the Babylonian yeshivot that granted the title of *alūf*, or *rōsh kallā*, to a central personality and leading light of the community, one who generally served as a judge. In his youth he certainly encountered the widespread distribution of the writings of the kind mentioned above, such as of Ibn al-Rāwandī, Ḥīwī ha-Balkhī, and other extremists of the rationalist schools of those generations. He also encountered the intensive Karaite propaganda in Egypt, for he grew into maturity about two generations after the final development of Karaism, and its blending with a branch of the exilarchate, the family of 'Anan. Even the writings of a Rabbanite thinker, David b. Marwān al-Muqammi, certainly seemed to him—if not like heresy—at least unfocused in the struggle necessary at that time, to prove the truth of the world of the scholars and the yeshivot. Thus, a sense of a sacred mission grew in Saadia's heart, and he felt compelled to become highly knowledgeable about every area mastered by the dissident adversaries. Indeed, he achieved mastery in these fields, whether in the philosophical discussions of those generations, or in the written Torah and the Oral Law, linguistics, liturgical poetry, and biblical commentary. Following his sense of mission, and cognizant of his intellectual ability, Saadia had great self-confidence, and he did not refrain from demonstrating this ability and skill and proclaim them openly. Thus, for example, in his letter ("the second one") to the Jewish communities after his appointment as gaon of Sura: "for suddenly the matter came up and we dealt with the fine points of the tractates and we explained their arguments and everyone understood them and it caused joy, for God our Master so wished to enlighten His people in Torah, and to reveal to them every vague and dim matter therein, and they understood what there was in the Mishnā and Talmud to understand". In the preamble to the *Sefer ha-galui*, when explaining the contents of the fourth part: "God does not

N, published by Marmorstein, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 136f.: "Dōsā my ancestor", see in Lewin, *ibid.*, 159). See the introduction by Dūnash b. Tamīm to the commentary of *Sefer ha-yeširā*, ed. Grosberg, 17. Cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 74. The letter from 921: 5, a; the Abbasid victory: Gil, *Hist.*, 313f. On his stay in Tiberias and Yahyā b. Zakariyya, see Mas'ūdī, *Tanbūh*, 112f.; Gil, *ibid.*, 176f.; *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/91), 284f., and note 9. Ḥalab: 6, a, lines 14-15. Mātā Maḥsiya: Sherira, *Letter*, 118. See Saadia's four letters, 5-8; the address in 5, in Arabic script: *min sa'īd b. yūsuf ra' al-kull* (=rōsh kallā); the preamble in 8: "the letter of the head of the yeshiva al-Fayyūmī of blessed memory, which he wrote in Baghdad when he was appointed to the *rāshūf*"; also see there, c, lines 1-4: "also any desire or question regarding 'the kingdom' (i.e., the authorities), tell us of it and we will then order the important men of mark in Baghdad among whom we live" etc. Also cf. Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 225f.; *Bēt rabbēnū*, see Rapoport, *Erekh mīlīn*, I, 251, and cf. regarding the location of the Sura yeshiva: Mann, *Texts*, I, 67ff., and note 16. The date of his appointment, cf. *idem*, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 423. "When I was in Iraq": Harkavy, *Zikk. la-rish.*, V, 150f.; and see his views on Saadia's stay in Baghdad: *JQR*, 12 (1899/1900), 538. The appointments of Ibn Sarjāda: in Harkavy, *Zikk. la-rish.*, V, 227f.; cf. Mann, *Tarbīz*, 5 (1933/4), 171; *idem*, *Texts*, I, 478 n. 4. Regarding *alūf*: the address in Arabic, see above in this note; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 74; Zunz, *Literaturg.*, 94; Schechter, *Saadyana*, 15; Malter, *Saadia*, 64, 150; Mann, *REJ*, 73 (1922), 107f.; Poznanski, *Hakedem*, 2 (1908/9), 108f.; Bornstein, *Sokolow Jub. Vol.*, 86 n. 2, (he, too, believed that the words *alūf* and *yeshu'a* were a title, *alūf yeshu'a*, given to Saadia); Sa'īd *alūf*, etc.: in Davidson, *Saadia's Pol.*, 34f. and in Poznanski, *Teshūvōt*, 8. Malter's view on the name She'ērīt, see in his: *Saadia*, 427. "Your servant, She'ērīt", see Mosseri IV.87.1; Eleazar b. She'ērīt: TS AS 146.4. The memorial list: BL Or 5549, f. 2; see also: Mann, *REJ*, 73 (1922), 111f.

refrain from sending a scholar to his people in every generation, so that he teach them and enlighten their eyes, so that they have an adjudicator to teach them, and thus through (this scholar) their issues will be solved"; meaning that it is he, Saadia, who is that scholar of his generation.

Saadia's first struggle was against the Karaites, as has been stated, about two generations after 'Anan b. Daniel, i.e., 'Anan "the second", the first 'Anan's great grandson. At about the time that Saadia was at the age of ten, storms raged in Palestine when the decision was made to put an end to the rule of 'Anan's family in its yeshiva, after two cousins of 'Anan b. Daniel, the sons of Josiah, Jehoshaphat and Şemaḥ, have ruled there for fifty years. When Saadia was twenty-three, i.e., in 905, he wrote *al-radd 'alā 'ānān*, the response against 'Anan. Sahl b. Maşliāḥ claims that Saadia refrained from engaging in public debates with the Karaites, "and the books he wrote about the Karaites were not published in his lifetime, but one of them reached b. Maşliāḥ and he answered him in his lifetime", but, Sahl continues, after his death his books reached the Karaites and he answered them. Clearly, Sahl meant to say that Saadia prevented his treatises from being given to the Karaites, and while even this is doubtful, one should not conclude that he prevented their distribution among the Rabbanites, such as that which Baron concluded, saying that "Saadia himself never published any of his anti-Karaite polemics". Sahl did not mean to say that "he did not publish the books he wrote against the Karaites", but "he did not release them to the Karaites". Except for his tract against 'Anan, Saadia came out against the Karaites much later, near the time he was appointed gaon of Sura, in his *kitāb al-tamyīz*, known in Hebrew as *Sefer ha-mivḥān* (book of the distinction), or *Sefer ha-hakārā* (book of cognizance), the most comprehensive work in his polemic against the Karaites, fragments of which are in the Geniza.

Other tracts against the Karaites, were *al-radd 'alā ibn saqawayh*, who is the b. Saqawayh that I have mentioned (above, sec. 209), and *al-radd 'alā al-mutaḥāmīl*, whose full title was *al-radd 'alā al-mutaḥāmīl 'alā al-mishnā wa'l-talmūd*, "the rebuttal of the detractor of the Mishnā and the Talmud". Many anti-Karaite polemical arguments are embedded in Saadia Gaon's biblical commentaries. As Moshe Zucker has shown, also the *kitāb taḥṣīl al-sharā'ic al-sam'īya* (comprehending, learning the oral Torah's laws) is a tract Saadia wrote against the Karaites' method of *qiyās* (analogy; it should be read *al-qiyās*, not *al-qiyām*, as read by some); Zucker published fragments of it, taken from Bodleian manuscripts.

The jewel in the crown of Saadia's polemical writings against the Karaites, is beyond doubt his rhymed treatise *essā meshālī* (I shall take up my parable, Num. 23:7). Salmon b. Yerūhim mentions it in his *Wars of God*: "the mantle of Saadia the Pithomite has been robbed, his wisdom despoiled, the phraseology, intelligence and wisdom lost, from the one who said I shall take up my parable and put forth my riddle (Jud. 14:12); this was first noticed by Pinsker. In 1927, Marmorstein published a fragment of *Essā meshālī* and after him, one after the other, Lewin, Mann, Brody, Davidson, Abramson, Scheiber and Hopkins. A discussion ensued in the research literature about the identity of the Karaite personality Saadia wrote against in this treatise. Klar showed that the heading, in Arabic script, found on the front-page of *essā-meshālī*, says: *al-radd 'alā ben aṣḥār*,

‘ibrānī, “the response against Ben Asher, in Hebrew”. From this they sought to learn, first of all, that Ben Asher, the famous Massorite from Tiberia, was a Karaite. Zucker tried to prove that the “I shall take up my parables” is identical with “the response against Ben Asher”; Abramson argued against this opinion, and against other ideas of Zucker regarding this work. Their polemic certainly contributed much towards clarifying the content of the tract and an understanding of its phrases. The fragments of this marvelous composition are awaiting the hand that will assemble them and present a unified, proven, and well-interpreted version of everything that we have today.²¹¹

²¹¹ See “the second letter”, in Revel, *Devir*, 1 (1922/3), 184. Scholar: in Harkavy, *Zikk. la-rish.*, V, 154f. The ‘Anan family at the Palestinian yeshiva: Gil, *Hist.*, 653-660; 790-794. Mann, *Jews*, I, 61ff., also ascribes these developments to external policy, but with reservations; to his mind, the Karaites were encouraged by the Muslim authorities, especially the Tulunids, who ruled Egypt until 905. When the Abbasids returned to Egypt in that year and again ruled Egypt, the time was ripe for Saadia to launch an attack on the Karaites. Nevertheless, this is not a picture that one should view in black and white terms, and what we find in the sources which Mann surveys is mainly confirmation of a proven fact, that during controversies the Jews did not refrain from seeking the help of the Muslim authorities. Saadia was 23 when he wrote his tract against ‘Anan, see Abraham Ibn Ezra, *Yesōd mispār*, 170, with the rule that between units and tens, the connecting *waw* should be written; “therefore when one says: ‘a man of twenty three wrote it to break ‘Anan’s counsel’” (the right way is to write *shālōsh we-esrīm*, not *shālōsh esrīm*); and it was interpreted, apparently correctly, that Saadia was meant, see the editor’s (Pinsker) correction, *ibid.*, note 206; also the comment of H.N. Bialik, in *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/4), 151. Lewin, *ibid.*, 147; Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 158 n. 32. Sahl b. Masliah’s argument: in Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 37. See Baron, *Saadia Anniv.*, 17. Poznanski, *Kar. Lit. Opp.*, 2ff. did not understand Sahl well enough, and on the other hand, he tried to prove that this argument was not trustworthy. Baron, *SRHJ*, V, 227ff., in his discussion of Saadia’s anti-Karaite polemic, for some reason finds that Saadia, himself, did not properly relate to this polemic, which he derives from Sahl’s argument above, without any foundation. Indeed, Saadia’s attack on ‘Anan did not stop him, 25 years later, from seeking the aid of the Karaite *nesi’im* of the ‘Anan dynasty in his struggle against David b. Zakkaï: “the offspring of Boaz, according to their confession, offspring of slave-women and eaters of camel meat” (hinting at the *nesi’im* of the Karaites as descendants of Bustanai and the Persian princesses), as formulated by Khalaf b. Sarjāda, see Harkavy, *Zikk. la-rish.*, V, 227; cf. also Mann, *Texts*, II, 133; Gil, *Hist.*, 790ff.; we must, of course, first decide whether to believe Saadia’s then rival, Khalaf b. Sarjāda. Also see: a small fragment of a tract against ‘Anan, published by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/4), 149f.; see more details about this tract: mention of it: Poznanski, *JQR*, 10 (1989), 240-244; also see in the list of books, TS 10 K 20.9, together with TS Loan 147, in Mann, *Texts*, I, 655, line 92: “seven quires, the answer against the Karaites”, which cannot be ascribed to Saadia with any certainty, nor to any of his writings, that he wrote against the Karaites, cf. *ibid.*, 675 n. 189; see also Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam yesh.*, 398ff., who presents statements against ‘Anan in the laws of circumcision, from Saadia Gaon’s commentary to Exodus. *Kitāb al-tamyiz*, see Poznanski, *ibid.*, 244-252, with fragments from the Bible commentary of Yefet b. ‘Alī, with quotations from this book of Saadia’s, with whom he argues. See Schechter, *Saadyana*, 29, 34, where he edited TS 10 K 2, which apparently is a fragment from *Kitāb al-Tamyiz*. The rebuttal of Ibn Saqawaih, see Poznanski, *ibid.*, 252ff.; Malter, *Saadia*, 265; see also Harkavy, *Hakedem*, 1 (1906/7), 64f., with fragments from this tract found in MS Antonin 204. Also see the quotation from this tract in TS Ar. 51.36. *Mutaḥāmīl*: this root in the sixth form has more than one meaning, among others: to be biased. See the quotation from Nissim b. Jacob, in Poznanski, *ibid.*, 254f.; cf. Abramson, *Kiryat Sefer*, 26 (1949/50), 88; *idem*, *Rav Nissim Gaon*, 331f.; on the polemic arguments in Saadia Gaon’s Bible commentary, see Poznanski, *ibid.*, in the continuation. *Kitāb taḥṣīl al-sharā’if*: Poznanski, *Kar. Lit. Opp.*, 97. See also: Malter, *Saadia*, 400; Zucker, *Tarbiz*, 41 (1971/2), 372ff.; according to Moses Ibn Ezra, *Muḥāḍara*, 48ff., there were in this tract details (that he quotes) about the exiles deported to Assyria and Babylonia, with a commentary, which was then current, of geographical place names in the

(212) Something that greatly preoccupied Saadia was calculating "the end of the days". He dealt with it in his *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, in the *Sefer ha-galui*, in his Genesis commentary and his commentary on the book of Daniel. The main discussion is in the eighth treatise of the *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*. Saadia attempts to reconcile the contradictions in different places, especially in Daniel, and the number he arrives at is 1335, but we do not know the starting point of his computation. There is evidence that the Jews expected—perhaps in light of Saadia's calculations—that the messiah would arrive in AD 968, or 970. The principal Karaite figures, Salmon b. Yerūhim, and Yefet b. ʿAlī after him, vigorously opposed these computations of Saadia.

Saadia Gaon should be seen as one of the most prolific writers in the period under discussion. According to lists of the names of his edited works assembled by Malter (at the end of his book) it may be estimated that he had about one hundred written works. Lists of them, spread over a number of fields, have been preserved in the Geniza from early times. Even the early Arab bibliographer, Ibn al-Nadīm, who lived some two generations after Saadia (he died in 995), thought it proper to include a list of his writings. He writes: "among the chosen of the Jews and their scholars who were well-versed in the Hebrew language, the person whom the Jews claim was greater than anyone yet, is al-Fayyūmī, whose name was Saʿīd, and some say Saʿdyā. He was almost our contemporary and there are those alive who knew him". Here, Ibn al-Nadīm lists some of his books: *al-mabādī* (the beginnings; he meant: the commentary to the *Sefer yeširā*); *al-sharāʿī* (the laws); *tafsīr ishaʿyā* (commentary to Isaiah); *tafsīr al-tawrah nasqan bi-lā ḥarj* (commentary on the Torah, by its order, without omitting anything); *al-amthāl*, *wa-hū ʿashar maqālāt* (proverbs, which is [a book] of ten treatises); *tafsīr aḥkām da ʿūd* (commentary on the laws of David); *tafsīr al-nukat* (commentary on the parables), *wa-huwa tafsīr zubūr da ʿūd* (which is a commentary on David's psalms; it seems that he meant the Book of Proverbs); *tafsīr al-sifr al-thālith min al-nisf al-ākhīr min al-tawrah mashrūḥ* (a commentary on the third book of the last half [i.e.: Numbers] of the Torah, explained); *tafsīr kitāb ayyūb* (commentary on the Book of Job); *kitāb iqāmat al-ṣalawāt wa-l-sharāʿī* (the book of fulfilling the prayers and the laws); *kitāb al-ʿibbūr wa-huwa al-taʾrīkh* (the book of the leap year, which is the book of history [the chronicle]).

At the beginning of the eleventh century, a scholar of Fustat by the name of Nathan *he-ḥāvēr* b. Yeshūʿā, had twenty-nine books belonging to a colleague, of which the owner had prepared a list, most of them being works by Saadia Gaon. In a list of books in the Geniza, copied (in 1113)

Bible. Salmon b. Yerūhim: *Milh.*, sec. xi, 93; Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 18. Marmorstein, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 126ff.; Lewin, *Tarbiz*, 3 (1931/2), 147ff.; Mann, *Tarbiz ibid.*, 380ff.; see Lewin's summarizing article, in *Sefer Seʿadyā Gāʾōn*, 481ff.; Brody, *Alummah*, 1 (1935/6), 49ff.; Davidson, *Kohut Mem. Vol.* (Hebrew part), 9ff. Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 32 (1962/3), 160ff. (see *idem*, *ʿInyānūt*, 43-60); Scheiber, *Tarbiz*, 34 (1964/5), 228ff.; Hopkins, *Miscellany*, 61ff. (the fragment edited by Hopkins was re-edited by Abramson, along with notes, in *Sinai*, 84 [1978/9], 97ff.; cf. *ibid.*, 85 [1979/80], 102ff.); see also Fleischer, *Tarbiz*, 49 (1979/80), 102ff.; Klar, *Mehqārīm*, 276-281; Gil, *Hist.*, 182f., with more references; Zucker, *Tarbiz*, 27 (1957/8), 61ff.; 33 (1963/4), 40ff., Abramson, in the same vol. of *Tarbiz*, 58f. See another fragment, from a translation with commentary of *Essā meshālī* in Judeo-Arabic, in Allony, *Sinai*, 28 (1950/51); see Fleischer, *Settimane*, 26 (1980), 840.

from a list compiled by Saadia's sons, She'erit and Dōsā, that has been only partially preserved, there are listed nineteen of his works, including parts of his Bible commentaries, the scroll of the Hasmonaeans, the *siddūr*, *kitāb al-amānāt* (the "Beliefs and Opinions"), *al-shahādāt* (the testimonies), *al-waḍā'ī* (the deposits), the commentary on *sefer ha-yeširā*, and the order of the intercalations. In another list there is the *al-azhār* (the flowers, these are the fine commentaries), *aflāk* (heavenly bodies), *al-amānāt* (the "Beliefs and Opinions"), *irshād* (guidance), *sefer ha-galui*, "impurity and purity", *man' al-naskh* (the interdiction against abrogating the precepts, or perhaps the interdiction on the wine of gentiles [*nesekh*], or perhaps the impossibility of reincarnation), *sab'in lafza* (seventy words found only once in the Bible), *sillūq* (a kind of free verse *piyyūt*) for Yom Kippūr, a poem based on *sefer yeširā*, *ṣalāh* (prayer), *al-radd 'alā ba'ḍ al-naḥw* (response against a grammarian), *al-radd 'alā al-qārā'in* (response against the Karaites), *reshūt* (cantor's prayer) for *azhārōt* (*piyyūfīm* for *shāvi'ōt*), the seven days of mourning, *al-sharā'ī* (the laws), *al-tamyiz* (the book of discrimination), and the commentary on *sefer yeširā*. Among the bibliographies compiled by modern scholars, one should note the works of these scholars: Poznanski, a survey of Saadia's tracts against the Karaites; Steinschneider, a general survey of his works; and the same for Epstein. As mentioned above, Malter compiled a comprehensive survey of his works and a systematic bibliography, printed in the second part of his book on Saadia Gaon; see its Hebrew translation, with addenda, prepared by Isaac Raphael (Werfel). Aaron Freimann published a bibliography of studies on Saadia Gaon.

A complete list of all the Geniza writings containing Saadia's works or fragments of them, has not yet been compiled. Hirschfeld believed that the paucity of fragments of his commentaries that have been preserved (unlike their translations) was caused by the Karaites destroying copies of his books where he often attacked them. From what I have gathered together, I will note: a page with a calculation of First Temple times, which is based on Saadia and which mentions his *kitāb al-tawārīkh* (i.e., the chronicle), which among other things details the calculation of the era of the creation: "exactly 4788 solar years until this year", i.e., this was written in 1028; references and fragments of his Bible commentaries; also found was a fragment of his treatise on the resurrection of the dead, copied by an unskilled hand, which was the *al-maqāla al-sābi'a*, the seventh treatise in the "Book of Beliefs and Opinions", published by Bacher, in 1896, from a manuscript found in St. Petersburg, and also found in the translation of Judah Ibn Tibbon; a rhymed preamble has been found to a comprehensive essay that includes responsa of Saadia. Mentioned therein is al-Ḥasan b. Nisī the tailor, and it says there: "of our Master Saadia Gaon, may the memory of his righteousness be blessed.... who declares in his sayings all the unclarieties.... the distinguished powerful and mighty *alūf*....". There is a torn sheet with the title "a compendium of slaughtering laws, by our Master, Saadia Gaon of blessed memory"; in a list of books there is mention of "a volume regarding language, nine treatises of R. Saadia"; one of the most important Sicilian Jewish merchants, Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār (below, sec. 330), writing a commercial letter on 2 September 1056, from Palermo, with quite a bit about time difficulties, especially things relating

to events in the Maghrib and Sicily, mentions (in faded, illegible sentences) the *kitāb al-amānāt* ("Book of Beliefs and Opinions").

As is clear to all, Saadia's literary activity spread over many fields: *halākḥā*, prayer, *piyyūt*, philosophy, linguistics, Bible commentary, history writing, calendrical matters, and polemics. Saadia was a master of phraseology and language, both in Hebrew and in Arabic. He constitutes an important source for our knowledge of the history of that time, beginning with the state of the variegated spiritual activity and more down to earth matters, such as historical geography, and a variety of daily terms.

A criticism of some of Saadia's treatises (his commentaries on Isaiah, Proverbs, Lamentations, Daniel and *Sefer yeširā*; the Book of Beliefs and Opinions, the lexicon, the Book of Deeds, the Book of Discrimination, the rebuttal of Ibn Saqawayh, the Book of Impurity and Purity and the *Sefer ha-galui*), was written by Mevasser ha-Levi b. Nīsī al-Baghdādī, who is Ibn 'Ināba. This may have been Bishr b. Pinḥās Ibn 'Ināba, mentioned by Ibn Abī 'Uṣaybi'a (below, sec. 240, see there the note), regarding the year 997. The name of his treatise is: "the correction of the mistakes in the books of the Fayyūmī head of the yeshiva". Zucker's assumption, that the treatise was written after Saadia's death, at the time of the gaonate of Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, i.e., Khalaf Ibn Sarjāda, in Pumbedita (943-960), appears likely. One interesting example is Mevasser's argument against Saadia, who attacked "Ḥayawayh al-Balkhī", about his argument that the biblical verse, "And God saw the light, that it was good" (Genesis 1:4), means that God did not see the light previously. Saadia argued against him, saying that the Bible uses 'saw' in the sense of 'knew'; yet, Mevasser says, there is nothing wrong with Ḥīwī ha-Balkhī's claim, i.e., this is not a lessening of God's ability, for the light did not exist before then, and something that does not exist cannot be seen.

Among the few responsa of Saadia's that remain, one group ascribed to him and published by Kis, should be noted, including a responsum regarding the lashes meted out to the rebel. An Arabic version of a responsum ascribed to Saadia Gaon's in the collection *Shā'arē ṣedeq*, has been published by M. A. Friedman.²¹²

²¹² Regarding the calculation of the end times, see: Abraham bar Ḥiyyā, *Megillat ha-meg.*, 98f. (and see the editor's comments in the introduction, xi); Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 81 (statements of Yefet b. 'Alī); see details on Saadia's statements and those of Salmon b. Yerūhim, in Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 44 (1900), 405f., 519f. See also Lewin, *Sinai*, 6 (1939/40), 36ff.; cf. Silver, *Mess. Spec.*, 52, 54; Gil, *Blau Jub. Vol.*, 198f.; lists of books: Ibn al-Nadīm, 23, Dodge (Ibn al-Nadīm's English translation), 45 n. 19 believed *nakt* (should be *nukat*, plural) to be a transliteration of the Hebrew word *nākhōi*, a treasure trove; however, the title *tafsīr al-nukat* clearly means a commentary on (the book of) Proverbs. Nathan *he-hāvēr* b. Yeshū'a (see Gil, *Hist.*, Index): TS 13 K 1, Poznanski, *ZjhB*, 7 (1903), 184ff., and see *idem*, *ibid.*, 12 (1908), 111ff., with some lists of books from the Cambridge Geniza, with mention of Saadia's works. Writings of Saadia are also mentioned in an unidentified list from the Adler Collection, edited by Bacher, *REJ*, 39 (1899), 199f. See TS 6 J 9, f. 1 (apparently a copy of the *fihrst* whose beginning is in 9), edited by Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 423ff.; TS NS J 125 in Allony, *Alei sefer*, 6-7 (1978/80), 30; see also TS NS 298.52, in *idem*, *Kiryat sefer*, 43 (1967/8), 129 where a commentary to the Book of Isaiah is mentioned; *daftar al-sab' in lafza li-rōsh al-mathiba* (the quire of the 70 words by the head of the yeshiva) is mentioned in yet another *fihrst* edited by Mann, *Texts*, I, 653; *ibid.*, 655: "seven quires of the answer against the Karaites" (from TS 10 K 20.9, together with TS Loan 147). See the bibliographical articles: Poznanski's article: *JQR*, 10 (1898), 238ff., on the anti Karaite

(213) As has been stated, Saadia Gaon died on 17 May 942. We have seen that during the controversy that erupted between him and the exilarch David b. Zakkai (above, secs. 144-145), the latter issued a ban against Saadia and even appointed a gaon in Sura, Joseph, "son of our Master Jacob Gaon", instead of him. Sherira, in his *Letter*, also knew his nickname "known as Bar Saṭyā", and was not impressed by him: "he was very young and not much of a scholar compared to our Lord and Master Saadia Gaon"; nevertheless, Saadia was forced to escape and hide from the exilarch, and "R. Joseph acted as gaon in Maḥsīyā". After Saadia and the exilarch became reconciled, Joseph was not removed from his post in Sura, writes Sherira in his *Letter*. After Saadia's death, "the position of Joseph completely declined and he had not any authority even as compared with R. Aaron Gaon". This Aaron Gaon is Khalaf b. Sarjāda, who was appointed gaon of Pumbedita one year after Saadia's death, i.e., 943, and served in the post until his death in August 960; we do not know the nature of the problems that then arose between Sura and its gaon, Joseph, and Pumbedita under Aaron ha-Kohen. Anyway, according to Sherira, Sura suffered a total decline, and Joseph left and moved to Baṣra where he lived for the rest of his life. "And until now there is no yeshiva in Sura", Sherira notes in

tracts; and see a Geniza fragment that was in the possession of E.N. Adler, from an anti-Karaite tract ascribed to Saadia: Schreiner, *ZfHB*, 3 (1899), 91ff.; see Poznanski, *ibid.*, 172ff., who showed that the arguments there were against Salmon b. Yerūḥim (MS Leiden, Warner 41), and see there the fragment from Salmon's tract. Steinschneider, *Kaufmann Mem. Vol.*, 144-168; cf. *idem*, *Ar. Lit.*, 186; Eppenstein, *Beiträge*, 69-145; Malter, *Saadia*, 137-419 (the Hebrew version: *Sefer Rav Se'adyā*, 571-643; I. Raphael [Werfel], *ibid.*, 644-657, with details on Saadia studies); see: Freimann, Saadia, Bibliography, *Saadia Anniv. Vol.*, 327-339. The calculation of the Creation and the chronicle: see Marx, *REJ*, 58 (1909), 299f., where he edited TS Loan 133, where the *kitāb al-ta'rikh* of Saadia is mentioned; his Bible commentaries: Mann, *REJ*, 73 (1922), 110f.; Hirschfeld, *JQR*, NS 6 (1915/6), 359ff. See Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 191ff., where the commentary on Proverbs is mentioned, and a Pentateuch MS with his commentary; TS 10 K 20, f. 7, ed. Mann, *REJ*, 72 (1921), 180f., mentions commentaries to the pericopes: *we-ēlē ha-mishpā'im* (Ex. 21:1: "These are the judgments"), *be-shalah* (Ex. 13:17: "when Pharaoh had let the people go"), and *wa-yishma' yitrō* (Ex. 18:1: "When Jethro.... Heard"); *fi karārīs* (in quires). The fragment of the article on resurrection: TS K 27, f. 66; cf. Bacher, *Steinschneider Festschr.* (Hebrew part), 105f.; "the book of beliefs and opinions", ed. Kitover (1884/5), 168f.; ed. Kafah, 218ff.; see Malter, *Saadia*, 360; the rhymed introduction: ENA NS 64, f. 20; the compendium on the rules of *sheḥitā*: TS NS 100.2; the volume regarding language, in the bookseller's list, Mosseri I.106, in Mann, *Texts*, I, 658f.; also his commentary to the pericopes *aḥarē* (Lev. 16:1: "after the death") and *qedōshīm* (Lev. 19:2: "ye shall be holy"); and also: *qawānīn siddūr* ("the rules of the prayer book"), "all of it together, in two parchment quires"; Skoss, *JQR*, NS 23 (1932/3), 332f.; *kitāb al-amānāt*, mentioned by Hayyim b. 'Ammār: 650, b; when 111 years had past since Saadia's death. Regarding the Arabic, see the book by Y. Ratzaby, *Ōṣar ha-lāshōn ha-ʿarāvit be-taḥsīr Rav Se'adyā Gaon*, and additional comments of Pianta, *Tarbiz*, 56 (1986/7), 144f. Regarding Saadia's Book of Deeds, see Ben-Sasson, *Shenāton*, 11-12:135, 1983-1986. The responsum regarding lashing the rebellious, see Kis, *Gaonī Resp.*, 15; see Friedman, *Dinē Israel*, 13-14 (1985-88), 240-245; see the beginning of the query and the responsum *ibid.*, 242, line 8 (regarding inheritance); cf. Poznanski, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/3), 427; Mevasser: see Harkavy, *Zikk. la-rish.*, V, 68-72, 182-184; the book was edited by Zucker, New York 1954/5; see there p. 21, and the translation: 73. See in Abramson, *ʿInyānōt*, 65f., the first page of the book that he found in the Geniza: TS K 6.120; afterwards the article by Stern: *REJ*, 126 (1967), 113ff. who was unaware that Abramson had preceded him. Stern showed that Mevasser's *kunya* was Ibn ʿUnāba, not Ibn ʿUshba, as other students had thought. The copy from which that first page was found had belonged—as the colophon shows—to the Jerusalemite Ezekiel ha-Kohen b. ʿAlī b. Ezekiel; about him see Gil, *Hist.*, 599, in the note and in the Index.

summarizing the affair, writing in 987 or somewhat earlier, i.e., about thirty years after the death of Joseph b. Jacob bar Saṭyā. These details were known in those generations, from about 943 to 987, and Nathan the Babylonian, who related the events in Babylonia in about 960, knew that after the controversy was over, Joseph, at his home, would receive “the *ḥōq*, i.e., the grant, that he would take when he was head of the yeshiva”, until “R. Saadia died and Joseph b. Jacob led his yeshiva in Sura”. Yet Nathan the Babylonian did not know about Joseph’s removal, and did not mention Baṣra. Sherira noted that this Joseph was the son of a gaon named Jacob, and Abraham Ibn Da’ūd, in the *Book of Tradition*, erred when he concluded that he was the son of Jacob Gaon b. Mordecai, who, as we have seen, was gaon of Sura (above, sec. 186) at about AD 800. This is impossible because of the great time differential, and it seems that Joseph Gaon’s father was Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai (above, sec. 204), gaon of Sura, apparently from 914, which is confirmed by what Khalaf b. Sarjāda writes in his ‘notebook’: “and the *nāsī* (David b. Zakkai) ordered that Saadia be removed from his exalted position and be replaced by our Lord and Master Joseph Gaon, who was a descendant of geonim, grandson of *kōhanīm*” (priests), etc. Joseph was apparently the younger brother of Yōm Ṭōv ha-Kohen b. Jacob, the weaver, who was gaon of Sura after his father, until 925. A third brother was Ephraim b. Saṭyā, appointed by Khalaf b. Sarjāda as judge in Mosul, and, as we have seen (above, sec. 144), Alexander Marx ascribed three of six responsa of the Adler collection to this Joseph b. Jacob. This ascription was apparently impossible from the chronological standpoint, for a parallel of one of the queries dealt with issues belonging to AD 992.

Mann conjectured that it is this priestly family whose sons were geonim in Palestine in the eleventh century (descendants of Joseph ha-Kohen b. Menahem; the first of these geonim was Solomon ha-Kohen b. Joseph), related to mysterious heads of “the yeshiva of the diaspora”, from which the Sura geonim after Joseph b. Jacob b. Saṭyā descended; while for some reason Sherira Gaon disregarded them in his *Letter*. This assumption might have been strengthened by the fact (that Mann, apparently, was not aware of) that Joseph b. Saṭyā, like his forebears and his brothers, were priests. Yet this assumption is invalid, because today we clearly know that this priestly family of Palestinian geonim came from the Maghrib, from Sijlmāssa.²¹³

²¹³ See Sherira, *Letter*, 118; Ibn Da’ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 42, where his name is Joseph b. Jacob b. Mordecai; Nathan the Babylonian in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 81, 83. The text of Khalaf b. Sarjāda: Harkavy, *Zikk. la-rish.*, V, 228; see there note 9 of Harkavy, which makes Jacob, the father of Joseph, a son of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, who are the Naṭrūnai and Hillai who were geonim in Sura; however, this is incorrect, because the latter two were not *kōhanīm*; cf. Lewin, in Sherira, *Letter*, 118 n. b. Regarding the responsa edited by Marx: the first one of the responsa was part of a responsum found in *Resp. Ge’ōnē mizr. u-ma’ar.*, no. 172, which deals with something that occurred in Fustat in Sel. 1280, i.e., 969—a father denied his son a sixth of the estate he had considered leaving him. 23 years later, in 992, the younger brother claimed that his older brother had seized this sixth. The *kōhanīm*, Palestinian geonim: Mann, *Jews*, II, 62-66; *idem*, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 227; Gil, *Hist.*, 600ff.; *idem*, *Te’uda*, 7 (1990/91), 298f.; Harkavy, *Zikhr. Shem. b. H.*, 11 n. 8, found a version of a letter of Sherira Gaon’s where Joseph b. Jacob is called alias b. Saṇiyyā (instead of Saṭyā) from which he assumed that it may have been distorted from Kharsanāyā, i.e., of Khurāsān, which is not likely at all.

9. *The renewal of the Sura yeshiva; Samuel ha-Kohen Gaon b. Hophni*

(214) After Joseph b. Jacob, Sherira Gaon tells us in his *Letter*, the Sura yeshiva ceased to exist, which was still the case when he wrote the *Letter* (987), as said above, stating that “until now there is no yeshiva in Mātā Maḥsīya”. Yet a few years after the gaon wrote his *Letter*, the Sura yeshiva apparently resumed operation. I have already discussed (above, sec. 127) the personality of the renewer of Sura, i.e., of the person who collected the money for its renewal, and assumed that it was the *nagid* of the Maghrib, Abraham b. ‘Aṭā’. Clear proof of Sura’s renewal is the letter of the Sura gaon, ŠEMAḤ ŠEDEQ B. ISAAC, to Elḥanan b. Shemariah. This letter was discovered in the Geniza’s Mosseri collection, and was first published in 1925, by both Chapira and Mann, each one separately. The letter was written sometime between Sherira Gaon’s *Letter*, and the first letter we know of the next Sura gaon, Samuel b. Hophni—i.e., written between 987 and November 998, i.e., circa 990—the assumed time of Sura’s renewal. According to the address of the letter, Šemaḥ Šedeq was a descendant of Palṭoi b. Abayē, gaon of Pumbedita (841-858), and the great grandson of his son, Isaac Šemaḥ, also a Pumbedita gaon (872-888), and grandson of Palṭoi b. Isaac Šemaḥ. We have already seen (above, sec. 108) the nature of the special ties that Šemaḥ Šedeq sought to renew with the Babylonian community of Fustat, through the aegis of Elḥanan b. Shemariah; one wonders why he referred to himself, in the address, in the plural as “head of the yeshivot”. According to a memorial list in the Geniza, Šemaḥ Šedeq died after Hophni the chief judge (father of Samuel) and before Sherira Gaon, which gives us cause to say that he died near the end of the tenth century; but since the first letter (known to us) of Samuel b. Hophni, who became gaon after him, is from November 998, we can assume that Šemaḥ Šedeq died shortly before, in 997, or at the beginning of 998.²¹⁴

(215) SAMUEL HA-KOHEN B. HOPHNI, who became the gaon of Sura after Šemaḥ Šedeq b. Isaac, was a talented and learned man, who certainly enjoyed great personal prestige. He had characteristics in common with Saadia Gaon, mainly because of his great scholarship and literary output, his powerful personality and great self-assurance. He, too, was a great believer in his role as the leader who determined the fate of his flock; he interprets

²¹⁴ See Sherira, *Letter*, 118. The letter of Šemaḥ Šedeq: 45, and see in its preamble details on former publications and on studies about it. The letter of Samuel b. Hophni (after having been appointed Sura gaon): 48; Chapira, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5) thought that the assumed time when BL Or 5552 E was written, which is part of 52 in my collection, was between 987 and 997 (AM 4757); but the correct time of writing was around 1008. Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 229, assumed that Šemaḥ Šedeq was the writer of 13, written by “the grandson of Tōv”, in 953, but later changed his mind, see *HUCA*, 3 (1926), 309f., where he understood that Isaac Šemaḥ had two sons: Tōv, the grandfather of the writer of 13, and Palṭoi, who was the chief judge under the gaon, his father, Isaac Šemaḥ, the grandfather of Šemaḥ Šedeq, who became gaon of Sura. Also see: Rosenthal, *Šenātōn*, 11-12 (1983-86), 597. The death of Šemaḥ Šedeq: TS 6 K 2, f. 2, in Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 228.

Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you (Deut. 1:13), as: there must be general agreement (*ijmāʿ*) about the priority of the leaders, but the person who chose them was Moses (Exodus 18:25), according to three traits; had Moses not appointed them, the nation's choosing them would not have been worth anything; that was certainly the case with Joshua: even though it was God who chose him, he said to Moses: Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him (Numbers 27:18)... i.e., his leadership would have had no validity except for Moses' laying his hands upon him.... thus we learn that there would be no validity for leadership except if it came from the head of the generation and of his time.

Samuel was a son of that same family of priests whose sons were heads of the Pumbedita yeshiva, the first of them being Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph (February 917-935), followed by his son Nehemiah (August 960-968). Hophni, Samuel's father, was also the (younger) son of Kohen Šedeq, and served as chief judge of the Pumbedita Court during the gaonate of his brother Nehemiah. In a list of books in the Geniza, works of Hophni are mentioned: a commentary on "these be the words" (Deuteronomy), a commentary on Numbers, on "this is the ordinance" (Numbers 19-21) and a *kitāb al-shahādāt* (book of the testimonies). In November 962, Nehemiah Gaon wrote to an unidentified community noting that "a terrible calamity befell us: the demise of the chief judge, our brother, may he rest in peace; (this happened) last year, in the month of Nisan; he was the pride of the yeshiva; the world became desolate for us"; i.e., Hophni died in march 962, when he was chief judge of the Pumbedita Court. Hophni had three sons: Samuel, Isaac and Ḥayyim. Isaac was chief judge of the Sura Court during Samuel's gaonate. It appears that Samuel was still young when his father died in 962, and that he himself died fifty years later. Samuel wrote a dirge, eulogy for his father Hophni, with the verses: "the dust of his grave is myrrh and aloes; he taught *negāʿīm* and *ahilōt* (Mishnā treatises); he removed doubts and clarified the *halākhōt pesūqōt* (above, sec. 183), propagated Torah, gathered pupils; as one wearing *tashbēš* (brodered coat, Ex. 28:4); and (was) the call of Jabez" (I Chr. 4:9-10). Who wears *tashbēš* might be an allusion to the priestly garments, as he was a *kōhēn*; the mention of Jabez alludes to the house of David, i.e., to his Davidic lineage on his mother's side; thus we see that this is a family whose sons were among the leaders of Pumbedita. We have a letter written by Samuel b. Hophni in July 977, when Sherira has been gaon in Pumbedita from 968, i.e., for nine years. And as Sherira asked the diasporas for support for him and for his party during Nehemiah's gaonate (above, sec. 147), we now see that Samuel b. Hophni, Nehemiah's brother's son, asked for support; he asks that queries be sent on his name to the yeshiva, and also 'donations' and *ḥumāshīm* ('fifths'), for the money sent reached the gaon, Sherira, and nothing is distributed to him and his party. Thus the controversy between the two families was still in full swing. In the end, perhaps after ten years, peace was reached between the rival parties, and Hayy b. Sherira married Samuel b. Hophni's daughter. This information is contained in two letters Samuel b. Hophni sent when he was already gaon of Sura, at about 1008, to the Qayrawān community:

complete peace was made between us and our Lord and Master Sherira Gaon, of blessed memory, before he was gathered in by his years, and with the gaon his son—may his Protector strengthen him—for his son married our daughter and a writ was composed between us, stating that all the donations arriving on the name of each of us will be for himself, none other participating; and if unearmarked donations arrived, or if they were without specification or on the name of scholars of the yeshiva, they would be divided half for us and half for our son-in-law.

Clearly, this agreement and the marriage had taken place when Samuel b. Hophni was still residing in Pumbedita. In another letter:

we have already informed you, our brethren, by our letters, that a long time, before our Lord and Master Sherira Gaon was gathered into Paradise, the elders of our yeshiva assembled together with the elders of our locality and made peace between them and us, also with the gaon his son, our son-in-law, may our Protector strengthen him, and the three of us were as one, and Hayy our son-in-law married our daughter.... and we set conditions that....

Also in the fragment of another letter from the same period we find a remnant of the sentence: "... send it to the yeshiva unearmarked without any one name of ours; for if you send it with his name, he will take it legally....". Despite the peace, there is still a sense of tension between Samuel b. Hophni and his son-in-law Hayy, and Samuel expresses the suspicion that his son-in-law was taking for himself money meant for both yeshivot, including 150 dinars sent by "the Master who was gathered into Paradise.... on the name of our counterpart", and he asks that Joseph Ibn °Awkal (who used to transfer the monies to Babylonia, after arriving from the Maghrib to Fustat) be warned about it. We also know of another daughter of Samuel b. Hophni's from a letter sent by a Ramla man who lived in Baghdad for twenty years, to Nehorai b. Nisim, in about 1100. He mentions—for what purpose is not clear—the son of a man descended from the *riyāsa*, i.e., people in the circle of the exilarch or the heads of the yeshiva, a certain "Abū Sa'd *ra's al-kull (rōsh kallā)*, son of the daughter of the head of the yeshiva Samuel b. Hophni".

It should be assumed that not long after that agreement in Pumbedita, the Sura gaonate became vacant with the death of Šemaḥ Šedeq. His son, Palṭoi, who was chief judge of the Sura yeshiva Court under his father, died before his father as we learn from a letter of Šemaḥ Šedeq's. He was writing to Elḥanan b. Shemariah, and expressed his joy at Elḥanan's impending visit to Baghdad "and our soul was revived just as if Palṭoi, the chief judge, of blessed memory, was standing among us, for he was our only son". Therefore, since Šemaḥ Šedeq had no heir, a situation arose where a transference of this priestly family, headed by Samuel b. Hophni, from Pumbedita to Sura, became possible. In Samuel b. Hophni's letters there is an obvious continuous effort to draw attention and gain the support of the communities in Fustat and the Maghrib, as we learn from a few of his letters that have been preserved in the Geniza (eleven), and there certainly had been more of them of a similar nature. He writes in November 998: "if you have dealings with our Maghrib people, or if you meet any of them, may God help them, please do us a favor, as is your wont with them, and urge them and admonish them regarding donations, as is customary and

proper; for God has punished me and reduced my status with them". At about 1008 he wrote: ".... for many years I have not been getting donations from your localities, they have stopped and have been absent and kept from me and have inclined towards our counterparts"; and it continues: "and they have starved us and made them sated, and have tortured us and have answered them" (*wa-ye'anūnū wa-ya'anūm*); and about the same time: "and if we swore to you our brethren that they (the Surans) often went hungry for lack of food and many times were in the cold without garments to warm up, it would be a sincere oath, and we have no way of strengthening them and supporting them, but our and their hopes for your donations and expectations of your gifts, just like the expectation of rain after the drought"; it goes on: "for the people of Babylonia are impoverished, they lost their property and became evil in the wake of the wrong doing and enormity of the burden".

From a draft of a letter written in Qayrawān at about 1010, to Joseph b. Jacob b. °Awkal in Fustat, we learn that Saadia Gaon's son Dōsā, too, was living in Sura with Samuel b. Hophni. Since Saadia had died in 942, Dōsā was then an elderly man. The letter dealt with a collection in Qayrawān on behalf of the Babylonian yeshivot, with the distribution meant as: half for Hayy Gaon, a quarter for Samuel b. Hophni and a quarter for Dōsā. As we shall see below, Dōsā became gaon of Sura after Samuel's demise. On the one hand, mentioning Dōsā's share separately shows that he belonged to Sura, due to his status as son of a gaon; on the other hand, it appears that the rivalry between Samuel's grandfather, Kohen Šedeq, and Dōsā's father, did not disappear yet completely; in any case, Dōsā's status was a much honored one, as he got a share equal to the gaon's. Another figure in Sura in that period, was the chief judge Isaac, brother of Samuel, i.e., Isaac ha-Kohen b. Hophni.

Among the personalities who maintained special ties with the gaon, one should note the Fustatian, DAVID B. BĀBSHĀDH, to whom he sent gratitude and good wishes in a letter sent shortly after being appointed gaon, in November 998, and also about ten years later, in a letter Israel b. Samuel b. Hophni wrote in his father's name. We know about this David b. Bābshādh that he eventually converted to Islam. Samuel b. Hophni had special ties with the Berekhiah sons in Qayrawān, especially the eldest, Joseph b. Berekhiah. In a letter Joseph b. Berekhiah wrote to Joseph b. Jacob b. °Awkal at about 1010, he mentions letters that had arrived (certainly via Fustat) from "our Lord Samuel", for the people of the Maghrib (as apparently should be filled in). Joseph b. Berekhiah continued to maintain ties with Israel b. Samuel b. Hophni, and care for him after the death of Samuel, and he asks about his remaining books, and notes that he managed to send queries to Samuel b. Hophni before the latter's death, written partly in Hebrew and partly in Arabic. Samuel b. Hophni notes in his letter:

now we have written carefully and loyally and as treasurer to our wise, educated and exalted Lord and Master Joseph *he-ḥāvēr* deputy of the yeshiva and its attorney, may God protect him, son of our Lord and Master Berekhiah, of blessed memory, both in writing to him and also in our writing to the people to appoint him and to count him among the teachers of the nation and purveyor of charity etc.;

he is the one who was appointed after the death of Jacob b. Nissim;

when you send them via our powerful and mighty one and our attorney and trustee, our Lord and Master Joseph *he-hāvēr* our great, wise and mighty, may our King (i.e., God) give him strength, son of our elder, our Lord and Master Berekhiah.... for he is in place of the vast and great, the mighty, our Lord and Master Jacob *rōsh kallā* who has been gathered into Paradise, etc.

It thus appears that Joseph b. Berekhiah won the trust of Samuel b. Hophni, especially regarding protecting his rights and the rights of Sura, lest they be discriminated against in favor of Hayy Gaon and his Pumbedita yeshiva. This special connection with Sura may have been forged by virtue of Samuel b. Hophni's forceful personality; perhaps also by virtue of the fact that Dōsā, son of Saadia Gaon, was there; from a Geniza fragment it seems that before his death, Samuel b. Hophni asked Dōsā to ensure that his son Israel would not suffer deprivation.

According to the Damascus manuscript, "our Lord Samuel ha-Kohen, son of our Lord Hophni died in the month of Av in the year Sel. 1324". In that year, 1013, Av began on 11 July. A Geniza fragment has a sentence "(he resigned his breath....) and our Master Samuel on Monday, 25 Elul....", which appears to be correct, for 25 Elul indeed fell in Sel. 1324 on a Monday, which was 15 September 1012. Samuel b. Hophni is mentioned among the Jewish scholars buried "in al-Anbār (i.e. Pumbedita), on the mountain", in the letter of the Ramla man who was staying in Baghdad, who wrote about 1100. This contradicts what Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Babylonia about two generations later, writes, that Samuel b. Hophni's grave is in Sura.²¹⁵

²¹⁵ See the commentary to Deuteronomy 1:13 (ed. Greenbaum, 493); Harkavy, *Me'assēf nidd.*, 222; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 4. ENA 2556, f. 3r, contains the genealogy of Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Hophni, and Hophni is referred to there as head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, which is not true; ed. Marmorstein, *REJ*, 70 (1920), 99 (who read, instead of Hofni: Hanini). Hophni's writings, see Nehemiah's letter: 15, lines 4-5; cf. Mann, *Hazofeh*, 11 (1926/7), 148ff., with another restoration, one which is not possible; following Cowley, *JQR*, 19 (1906/7), 105 (first edition of the letter); see also: Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 232; the sons of Hophni: 16, a, line 4: Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī, writing to the gaon Samuel b. Hophni on 7 August 999, sends greetings to Isaac, the chief judge of Sura, who was Isaac the brother of Samuel b. Hophni. See 58, b, line 8; the dirge over Hophni: in Harkavy, *Me'ass. Nidd.*, 7f.; on the Torah commentary of Samuel b. Hophni to the Pentateuch, see the comments of the editor, Greenbaum, on pp. 17f., with some changes of versions; also see *ibid.*, 397. The letter from 977: 47, cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 147f. The information about the peace and the marriage and the division of the money: 52, II, a, lines 4-11; 53, b, lines 11-16; 54, lines 1-2; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/8), 362f. The complaint: 52, a, lines 15-16; b, lines 10-12; another daughter: 85, a, lines 29-30. The death of Palṭoi b. Semah Šedeq: 45, a, lines 16-19. Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 232f., noted the fact that Samuel did not become chief judge of Pumbedita during Sherira Gaon's time, that is, he did not inherit his father Hophni's post. He assumed correctly, that Palṭoi died before his father; see *ibid.*, 233 (what was stated in the above place in 45); but contrary to this, the above assumed, in *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 414 n. 12, following TS 8 G 3, that before he was appointed gaon in Sura, Samuel b. Hophni was nevertheless chief judge in Pumbedita, because written there is, about *kitāb al-damān wa'l-kaḥāla* that it was written by the judge of the Gate, Samuel, son of the judge of the Gate Hophni, son of Kohen Šedeq, head of the yeshiva"; but this may be an error of the copyist, because only Hophni, the father, was chief judge in Pumbedita, and Samuel did not hold any post in Pumbedita before becoming gaon of Sura. Assaf, *Sinai*, 17 (1945/6), 136ff., did not pay attention to Mann having already mentioned this fragment, TS 8 G 3, and he edited it there, and he, too, like Mann, believed that Samuel b. Hophni had indeed been chief judge,

(216) In the remaining fragment of a letter written by Samuel b. Hophni to the Qayrawān community, we read, among other matters: "... indeed you knew of our proficiency in the Torah of God, and strength in Bible scholarship and the Mishnā and Talmud, and that we have interpreted some of the books of the Bible and tractates of the Mishnā and Talmud....". In one of his responsa he stresses his distaste of flowery language and *haggādā*; deliberating upon *halākhōt* is important to him and, unlike other geonim, that is what he deals with in his letters:

The early geonim, may their repose be in Paradise, used to write fairy tales in their letters to butter you up and make you happy and cajole you into taking an active role in the community. Be that as it may, our way is different: writing *halākhōt* and traditions, which is the fine flour, while the fairy tales are the chaff;even now, we have received the generous contributions of your generous people, and the gracious gifts of your righteous, and we have divided them among the scholars of the yeshiva, both the experts and students.... your queries have reached us and we wrote proper responsa, so keep sending all of your queries and doubts concerning the Bible, the Mishnā and the Talmud and you will receive responsa to your hearts' content for your enjoyment, you will receive and you will give and thus you will know of our ability and the difference between us and our counterparts and you will know of our strength in the Torah of God....

This was written in Elul Sel. 1296, August-September 985, when Samuel b. Hophni was still in Pumbedita, a few years before he became gaon of Sura.

either in Pumbedita under Nehemiah Gaon (after Hophni's death), or in Sura, under Semah Sedeq Gaon. The appeals to the communities: 48, 55, 56 (to Fustat), 49 and 51 (to Fās), 52, 53, 54 (to Qayrawān). The letter of November 998: 48; around 1008: 52, b, lines 4ff.; 53, a, lines 6ff. Dōsā in Sura: 198, lines 29f. David b. Bābshādh: 48, 55 (on the margins). The son of David b. Bābshādh, al-Ḥasan, is mentioned in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh*, VII, 307. According to him he emigrated from Egypt to Baghdad, settling there, and learned the principles of Abū Ḥanīfa's teachings from the *qāḍī* Abū 'Abdallah al-Ṣaymarī: his father is the one who converted to Islam; al-Ḥasan was a very talented person, he writes, versed also in knowledge of the Qur'ān and Arabic literature, as well as of mathematics and grammar; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī was a friend of his and they helped each other in their studies and research. He also notes that the descendants of Bābshādh had originated in Persia. Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥasan died in Dhū'l-qā'da 439, July 1047, when he was approaching the age of 40. It appears that the name Bābshādh was relatively common (it means: "the father's joy"). See, for example, Suyūfī, *Muḥāḍara*, I, 532: Abū'l-Ḥasan b. Bābshādh, an author of books, settled in Baghdad, dealt in precious stones, and died in Egypt, after falling down from the roof of the 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ mosque. About Abū'l-Ḥasan Ṭāhir b. Ahmad b. Idrīs b. Bābshādh it was said that he came from northwest Iran and died in Egypt in 1077; he composed a book about Arabic; cf. Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 49 (1979/80), 199 n. 2. It cannot be known whether these two were actually the same person, neither whether there was a family relationship between these sons of Bābshādh and the poet Sa'īd b. Bābshādh, cf. Fleischer, *Biqqoret u-farsh*, 11-12 (1977/8), 43ff.; *idem*, *Kiryat sefer*, 58 (1982/3), 407ff.; *idem*, *Mishlē Sa'īd*, 55 and n. 38. The vizier of Abū Kālījār (of the Būyids, the ruler of southern Persia, from 1026) was known as Ibn Bābshādh, see the entry Abū Kālījār in *El²* (by H. Bowen). The letters of Joseph b. Berekhiah: 144, a, line 18; 145, a, lines 9-10, 41-42; 146, a, lines 11, 15, 17-19. The appointment of Joseph b. Berekhiah: 52, II, a, lines 12ff.; 54 lines 2ff. The request of Samuel b. Hophni: 60, cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 153; even though the details were not preserved in their entirety, the meaning comes through. See the Damascus MS, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 189; cf. Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 103. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 44: he died "four years prior to the death of Rav Hayy Gaon", which is incorrect. See the Geniza fragment TS 6 K 2, f. 2r, line 7; see it in Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 419, where he read: in Av. Samuel b. Hophni's grave: 86, a, line 10; cf. Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 46.

Indeed, it appears that the gaon's main literary activity was in commentary and teaching many people through his writing. The style of his commentaries, like of the explanatory and homiletical letters that he wrote, is clear and logical and often based on systematic argumentation where each and every argument is given a number; he sometimes even numbered his blessings. Samuel b. Hophni was one of those who connected "the Torah and Mishnā and Talmud and sciences"; thus according to Hayy Gaon in his letter to the *nagid*, he notes there that in the days of "Aḏud al-dawla (977-983) there were Jews in Baghdad whom it would suit better being gentiles and who studied philosophy"; "we stopped them from doing so", both Hayy and his father-in-law, "our Lord and Master Samuel Gaon of blessed memory, as he would read such things, realized that it would not be to his benefit and stopped himself from doing so". In the 60s of the nineteenth century, such a statement aroused amazement, for it was tantamount to approval, though with reservations, to studying gentile sciences and philosophy; there was a general pattern to see this as having been added by an interested party, or as generally counterfeit. Nevertheless, today we can see that there indeed was a strong rationalist influence on the scholars of that generation; in all events this was clearly the case with Samuel b. Hophni, but also (though to a somewhat lesser extent) with Hayy, his son-in-law and rival (below, sec. 233).

A clear example of his method of commentary based on common sense, is the discussion of I Sam. 28:7-20, the woman with the familiar spirit of En-Dor: it was God, not the woman, who revived Samuel, and in one of the relevant sources we read (I am translating from Judeo-Arabic):

Do know that Samuel b. Hophni, of blessed memory, denied that Samuel was revived, and he based himself on reasons that we cannot cite because of their length. He thought that the formula "And Samuel said", that is repeated in a number of places, meant that it was the woman who spoke, and as such sought to trick Saul; it was a total fabrication. Thus he (Samuel b. Hophni) wrote in his book on *naskh al-sharā'ic* (Abrogating the precepts), in rejecting the view of the early scholars, of blessed memory, who believed that Samuel had come alive and it was indeed he who had said the words. This is what he said: if the intellect rejects the view of the early scholars, we do not have to accept them. How much more so did he use such reasons, not only in this truthful statement. Saadia Gaon agreed with the early scholars, yet it is far from acceptable that that woman knew all the hidden things, and said that it was God who raised Samuel from the dead in order to tell Saul what he told him; and the woman's call, when saying: "Whom shall I bring up unto thee?" cannot be reconciled with the truth, for rational proofs show that a person cannot raise the dead, etc.

Views such as these aroused great interest in the Jewish diasporas, and there is more testimony in a letter written by the Maghribi Avōn b. Šedāqā of Jerusalem, in August 1065, where he demands of the addressee, Nehorai b. Nissim of Fustat, that he acquire and send him eight quires that he himself (i.e., Avon) copied and left in Alexandria, with, among others, queries in his handwriting, of our Master Samuel (b. Hophni), regarding the woman

with the familiar spirit, the she-ass (Num. 22:28) and the snake (Gen. 3:4), and many other queries. This was about fifty years after the gaon's death.²¹⁶

(217) Samuel b. Hophni certainly viewed his writing as worthy of admiration, an expression of spiritual authority. "You knew of our strength in the Torah of God and our strength in Bible scholarship and the Mishnā

²¹⁶ The letter to Qayrawān: 54, lines 11-13, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/8), 363f.; see Assaf, *Teg. ha-g.*, 279, concerning Samuel b. Hophni's responsum regarding the oath of a hired worker, see TS 28.15 (which is the correct shelf-mark), *ibid.*, 283ff.; in this responsum he sought to display his knowledge of Torah and superiority over his counterpart, i.e., Sherira Gaon. (But there is no basis for Assaf's assumption, *ibid.*, that before he became gaon of Sura, Samuel b. Hophni was head of a separate yeshiva.) Similar to this is the style of his writing in 53 and 54 of my collection. The responsum's copyist was Shemariah b. Elhanan, as can be seen from his handwriting. Numbered blessings: 53, b, lines 4ff.; but others also used to write this way, such as Hayy Gaon in his letter to Qayrawān, 37, which Mann, *Texts*, I, 149f., ascribed because of the 'numbered' method, to Samuel b. Hophni, see the preamble to 37. See the 'numbered' method also in his responsum regarding receiving a *gēt*. "there are three issues in the tradition; one, the woman must be grown up and not juvenile.... the second, that she say: 'received', etc., see *Ōsar ha-g. to Giṭṭin*, 142. See this method also in 51 (his letter to the Fās community). The peroration formula, the *ʿālāma* of Samuel b. Hophni (also of his son Israel), was *berūt šālōm*, covenant of peace" (see Ez. 34:25) which was characteristic of this entire family (descendants of Kohen Sēdeq), cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 75; Assaf, *Teg. ha-g.*, 280, believed that only Samuel and his son Israel signed that way. Actually, we also find this *ʿālāma* in use by others: see Gil, *Palestine*, nos. 206 (Solomon b. Šemah), 404 (to Abraham ha-Kohen b. Isaac), 432 (Šādōq ha-Kohen b. Elijah Gaon), 463 (Hayyim *he-hāvēr* b. Solomon); also see Nehemiah Gaon's letter in my other collection, pertaining to this book, 16. See *infra* the discussion about Hayy Gaon (sec. 233), on his letter about Torah and wisdom, and its different versions, with references. Cf. also Lewin, *Ōsar ha-g. to Hagiga*, 13ff. and its appendices, 65ff., and see there also on Samuel b. Hophni's view about miracles (taken from *Resp. Lyck* and other sources). See the excellent dissertation of Sklare on Samuel b. Hophni's thought in matters of religion and *halākhā*, with a recondite discussion of the influence of the Muslim world of learning, especially the *muʿtazila*, on Samuel b. Hophni; also see *ibid.*, 22ff., a systematic survey of his writings, about 45 of which were in the area of *halākhā*, *ibid.*, 34ff.; and see now his book, *Samuel b. Hophni*, 11-38. See also the list of the published works of Samuel b. Hophni prepared by Abraham David, prefacing the reprint of Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, Jerusalem: *Qedem*, 1969/70. Regarding "the woman with the familiar spirit" (1 Samuel 28:7), cf. also the fragment of Hayy Gaon's responsum to Qābis, in Wertheimer, *Qehillat Shel.*, 13f. (no. 7), and also there on the serpent which spoke to Eve, and on Balaam's she-ass; in fact there is explicit reference there only to the matter of the serpent: "it is possible that the entire serpent species was such (during) the Creation". See Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, I, 298f.; 304ff., where the correct shelf-mark of the Geniza document is TS Loan (Misc. 36) 131; also see David Qimḥi's commentary to 1Sam. 28:24, where he presents the text of Samuel b. Hophni, where it says that he wrote it in his Torah commentary, at the end of (the pericope) *qedōshīm* (Lev. 20:27: "A man, also or woman that hath a familiar spirit.... shall surely be put to death"); also see Hayy Gaon's responsum regarding the story of the serpent, and the she-ass, and "the familiar spirit", in Assaf, *Mi-sifr. ha-g.*, 155. See the discussion on this in Grätz, *Gesch.*, VI, 7. Also see what is ascribed to Samuel b. Hophni: Bodl MS Heb d 44 which is from the commentary of Judah Ibn Bil'am to 1 Sam. 27:10ff.; cf. Poznanski, *ZfhB*, 1 (1896), 96-99; *idem*, *JQR*, NS 15 (1924), 3; *idem*, *MGWJ*, 44 (1900), 143. Avōn b. Šēdaqa: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 246 (no. 501); see also the quotations in Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, end, 12 n. 15; 14f. n. 20, according to Ibn Ezra, David Qimḥi, Ibn Bil'am. Also see the fragment from the treatise of Moses b. Joseph Ibn Kaskil, of Acre, copied by Samuel b. Isaac b. Samuel ha-Sefāradi, judge in Fustat, at the beginning of the twelfth century, in Mann, *Texts*, I, 389f. Also to be noted is the comparison made by Vajda, *REJ*, 131 (1972), 283, between the statement of Samuel b. Hophni regarding suffering that has no reward, and similar comments of the Karaite Joseph al-Bašīr, about a generation later, and it appears that he had read the statements of his predecessor and that they had influenced him. On the same matter, of divine reward, see also the texts by Samuel b. Hophni, quoted by Zucker, *Targum R. Saad.*, 22ff., from the gaon's book on precepts.

and the Talmud" (quoted above, in the previous section), are among the things that he wrote to the Qayrawān community. As for the Qayrawān leaders, the sons of Berekhiah, in a letter written after the gaon's death in about 1015, they pass on a request (via the Fustat man, Joseph b. Jacob Ibn °Awkal), in their name and also in that of Abraham b. °Atā', *nagid* of the Maghrib, to Israel, the gaon's son, and to Dōsā b. Saadia (Dōsā was then gaon of Sura), that they send them letters of the deceased gaon, the *kitāb al-sharā'ī* (book of precepts), *kitāb al-madkhal* (the introduction to the Talmud), *kitāb al-mawārīth* (inheritances), *kitāb al-hidāya* (guidance), and the commentary to Deuteronomy. A colophon on a book that contained seven treatises and changed hands a number of times, after having been the property of Exilarch Daniel b. Hisdai in 1135, shows that the manuscript contained also the *kitāb al-imāma* (apparently: cantorship) and the *kitāb al-ṭum'ot* (impurities) of Samuel b. Hophni, which included a *maqāla* (treatise) that he had written for a certain Abū'l-Ḥusayn b. al-°Akkāwī (of Acre). Modern students tried their hand at reconstructing the list of Samuel b. Hophni's works. Such efforts were made by Rapoport, Harkavy, Adler and Broydé, Margaliot, Poznanski, Gottheil, and Assaf.

Here is a list, compiled alphabetically, based on the lists of these scholars: *Al-°adad* (*al-°adda*), the numbers, probably the number of days after which a widow or a divorced wife may remarry; also, the reckoning of days after menstruation (*niddā*); probably also any numbers and calculations regarding women; *al-amlāk*, properties; *al-°ayba*, body defects (?); *al-aymān*, oaths; *al-bulūgh wa'l-idrāk*, laws regarding children and juniors; *al-buyūc*, sales; *al-ḍamān wa'l-kafāla*, sureties and deposits; *al-da'wā'ī wa'l-bayināt*, claims and proofs; forbidden marriages (*°arāyōt*); *al-ghaḍb*, robbery (?), penalties (?); *al-ḥawāla wa'l-safātij*, money transfer and money orders; *al-hiba*, laws of gifts; *al-ḥujr*, interdictions (?); *al-ikrāh*, coercion, forcing a person to enter a deal against his will; *kirā' al-nuhār wa'l-sawāqī wa'l-ābār*, renting canals, water wheels, fountains; *lawāzim al-ḥukkām*, duties of the judges; *madkhal*, introduction to the Talmud; *mawārīth*, legacies; *meṣī'ā*, findings; *muhūr*, bridal money; *mujāwara*, (relations between) neighbors; *naḥaqāt*, expenditures; *piqqādōn*, deposit; *qisma*, division (of property); *rahn*, mortgage; *shahāda*, witnessing; *sharā'ī*, precepts; *sheḥīṭā*, ritual slaughtering; *shirka*, partnership; *shufa*, preemption of contiguous fields; *shurūt*, deeds; *šīšūt*, ritual fringes; *ṭalāq*, divorce; *ṭum'ot*, impurities; *wakāla*, trusteeship; *waṣāyā*, wills.²¹⁷

²¹⁷ My thanks to Prof. G. Libson for his important remarks regarding Samuel b. Hophni's books of *halākhā*. Following his method, I looked for the meaning of the gaon's treatises' names by comparing them with similar names in the Arabic *ḥadīth* literature. A collection of studies that were made available in the past, also including publications of fragments of the gaon's treatises, was published in a special volume, by Yudlov and Havlin, *Tōrātān shel ge'ōnim*, vol. IV, Jerusalem 1991/2. See 54, c, lines 11-13 (the letter to Qayrawān); the sons of Berekhiah: 145, lines 41ff.; the colophon: 92; Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, I, 172f.; ch. 2 of *Ḥagīga: Oṣar ha-g.*, no. 20 = p. 15, to *Ḥagīga* 14b. See Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, 5ff.; also at its end, 3ff.; regarding the book of forbidden sexual contact, see note 94 *ibid.* (first part in the reprint edition), p. 156; cf. Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 174f.; to Harkavy it appeared that it was rather a treatise of Saadia Gaon's; see Harkavy, *ibid.*, 138f., note 81, who sought to correct what David Gans had ascribed to Samuel b. Hophni, preferring to ascribe these writings to Hayy Gaon; but here Harkavy erred. See Adler and Broydé, *JQR*, 13:52, 1900/901, and Poznanski's notes, *ibid.*, 324ff. The shelf-mark of the Adler fragment: ENA 2539; cf. Abramson, *Kiryat sefer*, 27 (1949/50), 79ff., with explanations and addenda.

(218) Then there are his commentaries; the first to publish the fact that there were fragments of Samuel b. Hophni's introduction to the Talmud among the Cairo Geniza writings was Cowley, in 1909. This is a fragment from the Bodleian Library, with the beginning of the introduction: ("I shall begin a shortened version of the introduction to the Talmud", etc.). In 1946, Abramson published four fragments of the book that were taken from the Bodleian Library and the Adler collection. The first fragment had an index of the chapters, from no. 19 to no. 51. Abramson continued to publish fragments of the book and discussions of it, and published the second (and final) part of the Talmud introduction. The book contained 145 chapters; in chapter 143, there is a dictionary of talmudic terms, which led to a detailed discussion in a study published by M. Assis.

In a letter written in 1008 to an unidentified personality with the title of *alūf*, Samuel b. Hophni asks the addressee to copy his Talmud introduction. He also asks that another of his treatises be copied, a commentary "of the book 'this is the ordinance of the law which the Lord hath commanded'" (Numbers 19-21). A fragment of this commentary was published by Lewin in 1944.²¹⁸

The *fihrst*, first edited by Margoliuth, is included in my collection, no. 59. See the list edited by Poznanski, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 313ff. See Gottheil, *Abrahams Mem. Vol.*, 156; Mann, *Texts*, I, 648, 656f., 658; Assaf, *Kiryat sefer*, 18 (1940/42), 280 and see Assaf's enthusiasm when faced with such a large quantity of writings. Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 38 (1962/3), 540, 550, 552, 554; *idem*, *ibid.*, 43 (1967/8), 127, 131, 132; *ibid.*, 122ff., he has a list of the owners of libraries mentioned in the Geniza and a bibliography regarding the book lists. See Libson's articles on *kitāb al-shu'fa*, *Tarbiz*, 56:61, 1986/7; *Pe'amim*, 45:71, 1990/91. Geniza fragments of *Sha'arē sheḥitā ū-ṭerēfōt* of the gaon were edited by Emmanuel, *Kiryat sefer*, 49:962, 1983/4; see Hildesheimer, *Moriah*, 15, 1986/7:17 (nos. 7-10).

²¹⁸ See Cowley, in *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 161, 163, where he edited the fragment Bodl MS Heb d 62, f. 98. See Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 20 (1956/7), 421ff. (where a fragment of it was supposed to appear, but apparently did not). See *idem*, *ʿInyānōt*, 173ff.; see a general discussion by Abramson, *Sinai*, 88 (1980/81), 193ff.; on the Talmud dictionary included in the Introduction to the Talmud of Samuel b. Hophni: *idem*, *Even-Shoshan Mem. Vol.*: 13ff.; in 1990 Abramson published a book containing chapters 141-145, which are the second part, the end of the Introduction to the Talmud (see details in the bibliographical index, under Samuel b. Hophni). See also Assis, *Lešonenu*, 56 (1992), 27ff. The letter to the *alūf*: 50, cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 73f.; Lewin, *Ginzē qedem*, 6 (1943/4), 36ff., and see its end, *ibid.*, 39, stating (in Judeo-Arabic) that "completed is the commentary of the pericope *zo' t' ḥuqqat ha-tōrā* (Num. ch. 19: 'this is the ordinance of the law'), which was composed with God's help by our Lord Samuel Kohen Gaon b. Hophni Kohen, of blessed memory of the righteous". This commentary is mentioned in a number of lists of books from the Geniza, see Abramson, *ibid.* There are more fragments of the Torah commentary in the Geniza. The commentary to a part of Genesis, as preserved in the MS of St. Petersburg, was published (with some addenda) by Greenbaum, Jerusalem 1978/9. See also Zucker, *Tarbiz*, 35 (1965/6), 153ff., who edited Bodl MS Heb e 73, f. 68, which is a single sheet from a quire, in a crude hand and with mistakes; it is the opening of the commentary on (the pericope) *ēlē ha-devārīm* ("these be the words", the first pericope in Deut.). Scheiber, *JJS*, 22 (1971), 70, edited TS C 2.146, containing a fragment from the commentary to the pericopes *wa-yēshēv* (beginning Gen. 37:1: "And Jacob dwelt") and *ba-midbār* (beginning of Num.: "in the wilderness of Sinai"); all this, on *kāghid baghdādī* (Baghdadian paper); Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 38 (1962/3), 554, edited a list of books where Samuel b. Hophni's commentary to Ruth is mentioned. See also Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 17 (1945/6), 140 n. 20, regarding a moribund *kohen*, who wishes to free his wife from the levirate marriage obligation, being a passage from his commentary to the pericope *wa-yehi* (beginning Gen. 47:28: "and Jacob lived") where Samuel b. Hophni promises to deal with it in *kitāb al-ṭalāq* ("book of divorce"), which is a proof that the Torah commentary was written before this book; cf. Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, 10, 155 (n. 92); see also Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 426. Detailed bibliographical

(219) Samuel b. Hophni wrote commentaries to many Talmud tractates, and it appears that we only have information about some of them; his commentaries on the tractates *shabbāt*, *yevāmōt*, and *ketubbōt* are mentioned in lists of books and also in fragments in the Geniza.

Among the works of Samuel b. Hophni that received the special attention of modern students, one should note the *kitāb al-ḍamān wa'l-kafāla* (sureties and deposits). In a Geniza document written by Sahlān b. Abraham, leader of the 'Babylonians' in Fustat, it states: "I compared this book with its Babylonian version, and written upon it, in the handwriting of its author, was: this is the version of the book of sureties and deposits, of the judge of the Gate Samuel, son of the judge of the Gate Hophni, son of Kohen Sedeq head of the yeshiva". The book, itself, begins on page two. As is clear also from its title, the treatise deals with matters of sureties and deposits (see also above, note 215).

Of the book *ahkām al-amlāk (qinyān)*, the laws of properties, a fragment was published by Abramson; that this fragment belongs to this treatise is Abramson's (apparently well-based) assumption, and he assumes that it was a relatively short treatise with six chapters.

The *kitāb al-hiba*, gifts, is preserved in a Hebrew version, copied by Asher b. Meshullam of Lunel, and edited by Assaf, who was the one who ascribed it to Samuel b. Hophni. The heading of the treatise says: "Laws of gifts written by R. Asher b. Meshullam, as copied from one of the geonim, of blessed memory".

The *kitāb lavāzīm al-ḥukkām* (duties of the judges), was first noted by Harkavy. Schechter published a Geniza fragment of it with a colophon according to which the daughter of Maṣliāḥ Gaon (Fustat, twelfth century) dedicated the book, apparently to the synagogue of the 'Palestinians' (*al-shāmiyīn*) in Fustat. Another page (not yet published) contained a list of twenty-three of the chapters of the treatise. The book had previously belonged to Maṣliāḥ's father, Solomon ha-Kohen b. Elijah Gaon (Solomon was the brother of Abiathar Gaon). Assaf republished the fragment edited by Schechter, along with two more fragments of the treatise that he found in Cambridge.²¹⁹

information on matters regarding the Torah commentary, were assembled by Sklare in his dissertation, 23f. n. 42 and in his book *Shem. b. H.*, 12-16.

²¹⁹ Mosseri I.122, a bookseller's list, includes, among other things: "the first chapter of (the treatise) *Shabbāt* of our Lord Samuel b. Hophni, of blessed memory" which was edited by Mann, *Texts*, I, 658. A commentary to *Yevāmōt* is mentioned in a list of books from the Adler Collection, edited by Adler and Brody, *JQR*, 13 (1900/1901), 54, identified by Abramson, in *Kiryat sefer*, 26 (1949/50), 79ff., as MS ENA 2359, which is in the handwriting of Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*; see *ibid.*, 83ff., an improved edition of this manuscript. J.N. Epstein, in his review of the collection *Resp. Tesh. geon. qadm.*, edited by David Cassel, regarding secs. 68-69 (14b-17b) *ibid.*, noted that apparently included within is a fragment of Samuel b. Hophni's commentary to *Yevāmōt*, see *JLJG*, 9 (1911), 223 (in sec. 69 the version: "Samuel said", is repeated a number of times.) "A volume containing the *Yevāmōt* commentary" is mentioned also in Bodl MS Heb d 66, no. 131, see it in Gottheil, *Abrahams Mem. Vol.*, 156; see MS Firkovich II, 313, no. 20, ed. Assaf, *Resp. Tesh. ha-g.* (1929), 129ff., whose part is similar to that published in *Resp. geon. qadm.*, no. 69, mentioned above. The commentary to *Ketubbōt* is mentioned by Gottheil (above, this note, on the same page): "*Ketubbōt* commentary of Samuel". *Kitāb al-ḍamān wa'l-kafāla*: TS 8 G 3, no. 1; it appears that the book left the possession of Sahlān's inheritors, and it has a remnant of the name of the owner, Nethanel ha-Levi, who may have been Nethanel ha-Levi

(220) A fragment of the *kitāb al-naḥqāt* (the expenditures; its Hebrew name in the sources: *Sefer ha-hōšā'ā*) was published by B.M. Lewin; it is a Paris manuscript. A large fragment, found in the Bodleian Library was published by Assaf. The treatise deals with: the laws of alimonies, expenses incumbent upon a man for the sake of his family according to *halākhā*.

The *kitāb al-sharikāt* (or: *al-sharika wa'l-muḍāraba*), the partnership and the mutual transaction, is mentioned in the list of books that remained *fi thaḡhr nō amōn*, i.e., in Alexandria. A fragment of a treatise found in the Schechter Geniza Collection at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, was published by Friedländer. Another fragment, in Cambridge, was published by Lewin.

Abramson published fragments of the *kitāb al-ṭalāq* (divorce), including a large part of the treatise's chapters, from chapter 19 to chapter 51. After him Assaf published another fragment of the treatise containing the end of chapter 37, chapter 38, and the beginning of chapter 39.

From the *kitāb al-sharā'īc* (book of precepts) Harkavy published a description of the contents of chapters 3 to 8 and 19 to 21 of one section of the book, and a description of (unnumbered) chapters of another part, from the Geniza, which he found in St. Petersburg. In 1894, Neubauer published a fragment of the Bodleian Geniza collection and ascribed the fragment to Hefesh b. Yašliah; but from a parallel fragment in Cambridge that Schechter published, it is clear that it is a commentary Samuel b. Hophni wrote about Saadia Gaon's division of the precepts, and it appears that this commentary was part of the introduction to Samuel b. Hophni's *kitāb al-sharā'īc*. In 1944, Assaf published another fragment from the Bodleian Library, from the description of the chapters: part of 2, 3, and 25. Sklare identified other fragments, which are included in his dissertation, both text and translation, along with an introduction and notes, and also in his book on Samuel b.

b. ʿAmram al-Sharābī, of the second half of the eleventh century, see 823, or perhaps Nethanel b. Moses, who was head of the yeshiva in Fustat in the twelfth century, as assumed by Assaf, *ibid.*, 136; the fact is that Nethanel ha-Levi was a widespread name. This fragment was edited by Assaf, *Sinai*, 17 (1944/5), 135ff.; it contains at the beginning a list of the book's chapters, which are 31, with the first five contained in their entirety in the above fragment. Another fragment, containing chapters 29, 30, and the beginning of 31, was published by Greenbaum, *Kiryat sefer*, 46 (1970/71), 154ff. See also the list of edited fragments of Samuel b. Hophni's books of *halākhā*, compiled by Greenbaum, *Mirsky Mem. Vol.*, 54ff. His claim that Assaf did not note the *Sefer ha-shef* of Judah b. Barzilai, where Samuel b. Hophni's *kitāb al-ḥamān* is mentioned, is not correct, see Greenbaum, *Kiryat sefer*, *ibid.*, 155, and Assaf's note, *Sinai*, 18 (1945/6), 382. More fragments, from Cambridge, were edited by Libson, *Tarbiz*, 58 (1988/9), 377ff., from chapters 10, 11, 15, 16, 27, 28; this is followed by a discussion on the details of the *halākhōt*, with comparisons with Muslim legal sources. Also see Libson's articles, in *Shenāton*, 11-12 (1983-86), 337ff.; *ibid.*, 13 (1986/7), 121ff.; and his article on Muslim influence on the *kitāb al-ḥamān*: *SI*, 73.5, 1991. *Aḥkām al-qinyān*, see Bodl MS Heb d 54, f. 44, ed. Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 18 (1946/7), 34ff.; the gaon lists there the conditions allowing for a gift to be valid: 'tractio' (symbolic drawing), "based on land", *ḥawāla* (endorsement), crediting, and the like. The note on margin says that the gist of the *halākhā* is in *Qiddūshin* chapter 1. *Kitāb al-hiba*: Assaf, *Mi-sifr. ha-g.* (1933), 1ff. *Lawāzim al-ḥukkām*, see Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 97: *lawāzim al-aḥkām*, *ibid.*, 279; and the fragment in: Schechter, *Saadyana*, 114f. *lawāzim al-ḥukkām fī'l-aḥkām* ("duties of judges in judgments"). See Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 15 (1943/4), 33ff., where he added TS 8.236 and TS K 19.10, with a continuation of a counting of the chapters, and which ends in chapter 42, which was not the end of the treatise (he has some mistakes in marking the fragments). Assaf published all of the fragments again in *Sinai*, 17 (1944/5), 113ff.

Hophni. There was also, owned by a private party, a manuscript of the Hebrew translation of *sha'arē berākhōt* ("chapters on the blessings"), about which it is assumed that it is part of the book of precepts that I.H. Weiss published in 1882.

From the *kitāb al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt* (names of God and His descriptions), Goldziher, in 1892, published a fragment from the Kaufmann Geniza collection, and discussed its recognizable mu'tazilite influence. It appears that it was written in honor of Abraham b. 'Aṭā', *nagid* of the Maghrib, who is mentioned there with impressive formulae. In an article Abramson published in 1981, he returned to this subject after he identified yet another fragment of the book in Cambridge. It was he who showed that this was the *kitāb al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt* that is mentioned in a Geniza list of books.

Some books of Samuel b. Hophni's are mentioned in commercial letters in the Geniza. At about 1050, Nehorai b. Nissim sent an urgent request to someone in Alexandria to send Samuel b. Hophni's book, "Impurity and purity" (the *kitāb al-ṭum'ōt*), because he needed it; further on he also asks for his *kitāb al-ṣiṣīt*. Judah ha-Kohen, 'ha-Rav', writes a letter in 1067 regarding books, the draft of which has been preserved, with a mention of Samuel b. Hophni's *kitāb al-mawārith*.

In a bookseller's list of books, there is the caption: "a small quire with ten queries for our Master Samuel, of blessed memory, a responsum against the Karaites". Even though we do not have the texts against the Karaites written by Samuel b. Hophni, evidence that he did write against them can be gleaned from the statements of Israel, the Karaite *dayyān* of Alexandria, b. Daniel, known as the Qūmisī, one of the "Dustar scholars" (apparently he was in the Tustari sect): "Along comes the errant Pithomite (i.e., Saadia Gaon), he and Samuel *walad* (=son of) Hophni trying to uproot the religion of the believers in Scripture (i.e., Karaites)... and all he does is write a book about forbidden marriages, my ears had never heard such nonsense, he permitted most of what our antecedents forbade from the time of the Second Temple".²²⁰

²²⁰ *Kitāb al-naḥqāt*, see Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 4 (1929/30), 61f., which is AIU III C, f. 12, edited again in *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, in the additions, 87f.; see Assaf, *Sinai*, 17 (1944/5), 118ff.: Bodl MS Heb e 73, fs. 59-66. *Kitāb al-sharikāt*: TS Ar 51.75 (as it should be), edited Poznanski, *ZjhB*, 12 (1908), 119ff., cf. Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, 21, 156 n. 96; see Friedländer, *Hoffmann Jub. Vol.*, 83ff.; Friedländer (*ibid.*, 85) assumed that the "Book of Partnership" (with, of course, the fragment which he had published) was part of a comprehensive treatise called *kitāb al-qisma* ('the "Book of Distribution)'), but this treatise is listed separately in a list of books, see it in Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 43 (1967/8), 132, TS NS 298.52, f. 2a, line 47: *kitāb al-qisma li-shemu'el b. hofni* (of blessed memory), and *ibid.*, 133, line 55 of the same: *kitāb al-sharika wa'l-muḍāraba*, already mentioned by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 6 (1939/40), 41f. (= *Sinai*, 6 [1939/40], 39f.). Lewin edited *ibid.* (*Ginzē q.*, 43ff.; *Sinai*, 392ff.) TS Loan 108, fols. 58-86, with a large part of what was edited previously by Friedländer; cf. Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, *ibid.*, 46ff., and *Sinai ibid.*, 395ff., in the Arabic text, from line 11 (13)ff. *Kitāb al-talāq*, see Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 17 (1945/6), 138ff.; Assaf, *ibid.*, 18 (1946/7), 28ff. *Kitāb al-sharā'ī*: Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, 10, 153f. notes 82-89, and see the part of the book from the Geniza that he edited, *Had. gam yesh.*, 442. See Neubauer, *JQR*, 6 (1893/4), 705ff., who edited Bodl MS Heb d 34, f. 108; Schechter, *Saadyana*, 42f. (no. XV), and see Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 15 (1943/4), 27-31; Sklare, *Shem. b. Hofni*, in the appendix at the end of the book. See Weiss, *Bēi Talmūd*, 2 (1881/2), 377ff., cf. Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 117. *Kitāb al-asmā'*: Goldziher, *Harkavy Festschr.* 95ff.; see Abramson, *Kiryat sefer*, 56 (1980/81), 721ff. (without noting the fragment's shelf-mark). The books list: TS NS J 125, ed. Allony, *Alei sefer*, 6-7 (1978/9), line 59 (on p. 39). Nehorai's letter: 276, b, lines 1ff. The

10. *Dōsā b. Saadia, Israel ha-Kohen, geonim of Sura*

(221) After the death of Samuel b. Hophni, apparently on (above, sec. 215) 15 September 1012, DŌSĀ, THE SON OF SAADIA GAON, became gaon. Saadia Gaon, in a letter written after he was appointed Gaon of Sura, mentioned his son She'ērīt, and did not mention Dōsā. She'ērīt was certainly the elder, and Dōsā might not have been born yet, in 928, or he was still a small boy. He apparently was born at the end of the 930s, i.e., he was about four-years-old when his father Saadia died, and when Samuel b. Hophni died, he was about seventy-five. Aside from the fact that Dōsā became gaon after the death of Samuel b. Hophni, we know that he wrote a letter to Hisdai b. Shaprūt, which contained, according to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, "the history of R. Saadia and the good things he did for the Jews", i.e., certainly some kind of biography of his father. It is reasonable to assume that this was after his father's death (942), when he was mature enough to write a letter to such an exalted personality—perhaps in the 950s. As for She'ērīt, by 953 he already had the title of *alūf*. There is certainly significance in the fact that it is Dōsā b. Saadia who inherited the post of Samuel b. Hophni, rather than Israel, Samuel's son. There may have been an agreement about it between Samuel b. Hophni and Dōsā, for Dōsā, after all, enjoyed great prestige as the son of Saadia Gaon, and was certainly already an old man, while Israel was still relatively young; it may be assumed that Dōsā had a strong party of supporters both in the yeshiva and in the diasporas. She'ērīt, Saadia's elder son, was certainly no longer alive at that time.

Even though the matters had apparently already been agreed upon, Sura's affairs did not proceed along still waters during Dōsā's gaonate. A letter from Qayrawān to Joseph b. Jacob Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat, that was written about 1010, i.e., before Samuel b. Hophni's death, deals with a special appeal for the Babylonian yeshivot and the distribution of the monies, with half going to Pumbedita (to Hayy Gaon), while Samuel b. Hophni and Dōsā would each get a quarter. A controversy about this broke out among the dignitaries of the Qayrawān community, the nature of which is unclear because of the state of the manuscript; nevertheless, there were complaints that until then monies were not earmarked for the Surans.

'rav': 841 (see the preamble, with a discussion on the identity of its writer). See also Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, 9, 136f. note 76, where he edited, from a Firkovich MS, the summary of *Kiṭāb al-bulūgh wa'l-idrāk*; Aptowitzer, *Krauss Jub. Vol.*, 104f., quoting from Samuel b. Hophni's *Sha'arē sheh'itā*, from a MS of *Avī ha-ēzer* of Eliezer b. Joel ha-Levi; the "ten queries": TS 10 K 20.7, first edited by Mann, *REJ*, 72 (1921), 180f. (not as translated by Mann, *laff* does not mean here: *beau*, but small.) Sklare, in his dissertation, assembled fragments from this treatise, adding a preamble, translation, and notes; in the part of the treatise that he succeeded in revealing and publish there, there is nothing explicit about the Karaites. The text of Israel b. Daniel: Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 174f. 743 in my collection is a letter of this Israel to Salāma b. 'Allūn al-Ṣayrafi (the money-changer), see the preamble to this letter. Also see "the chapter of the examination of the meat (to distinguish it) from the fat and the tendons, from among the chapters of the gaon our Lord Samuel b. Hophni of blessed memory", published by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 2 (1922/3), 16ff. (from a MS of *Sha'arē dūrā*, in the Adler collection of New York).

The sons of Berekhiah (apparently mainly Joseph b. Berekhiah) write from Qayrawān at about 1015 to Joseph b. Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, mentioning that they had seen Israel's letter with complaints, bitter to the extent of tears. No more details can be garnered because of the poor state of the manuscript, but there is an implication that there were problems regarding the distribution of the monies. A fragment of a letter that may be ascribed to Dōsā, when he was gaon, contains the writer's promise that under no circumstances would he let (Israel?) be deprived in the money distribution. The addressee was one of the friends of the head of the yeshiva "our Lord and Master Samuel", i.e., Samuel b. Hophni, and the writer was holding a written agreement with detailed conditions, a copy of which he intended to send to the addressee, but he did not trust the letter carriers. He also mentions a letter written to him (by Samuel b. Hophni?) two days before his death, where he asked him to care for his son. Another important point derives from the information that I have shown above, i.e., that the heads of Sura, Samuel b. Hophni and his son Israel, and also Dōsā b. Saadia, enjoyed strong support in Qayrawān, not only from the sons of Berekhiah.

Remnants have remained showing the extent of Dōsā's ties with the diasporas, especially with the Maghrib. He wrote a responsum to Qayrawān answering a query regarding a deed whose date was a Sabbath. They ask him about the search for *ḥāmēš*, leavened food, based on what they found "in the commentaries of the gaon, your father", that it is forbidden to stop it, and if you stop, then you have to first repeat the blessing, and in his responsum he explains his father's opinion.

A letter written by Hayy Gaon to Elhanan b. Shemariah in Fustat, contains information about Dōsā's death. The letter is dated 19 Shevat Sel. 1329, i.e., 7 February 1018, and was certainly written not long after Dōsā's death. Some time had elapsed between the date of the death and when the letter was written, and it should be assumed that Dōsā died in January 1018.²²¹

(222) According to what had apparently been previously agreed upon, SAMUEL B. HOPHNI'S SON, ABŪ'L-AʿLĀ ISRAEL, then became gaon. Above we have already seen how the Sura inheritance affairs were arranged when Dōsā became gaon, with the obligation to care for Israel according to the

²²¹ Saadia's letter: 8, a, line 16; cf. Poznanski, *Hagoren*, 6 (1905/6), 46f.; Mann, *Texts*, 153; Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 34 (1964/5), 174; see his assumption that Dōsā was 12-years-old when his father died, for which there is no proof in the sources; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 35; She'ērīt *aliyf*: see 9, a, line 4; the letter to Hisdai Ibn Shaprūt: Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 42, cf. Mann, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 768 n. 3; *idem*, *ibid.*, NS 7 (1916/7), 486 n. 32. The letter from Qayrawān: 198, lines 29ff.; Israel's complaints: 145, a, lines 9-10. The fragment ascribed to Dōsā: 60. A deed written on the Sabbath: Wertheimer, *Qehillat Sh.*, 72; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 6 (1934/5), 240f. Checking for *ḥāmēš*: TS 12.724, ed. Schechter, *Saadyana*, 58f., where the editor noted that part of the responsum was included in *Resp. Sha'arē tesh.*, no. 87; it was published again: Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/4), 70f.; *Ōsar ha-g. to Pesāḥim*, no. 22, together with the fragment from *Resp. Sha'arē tesh.*, and see *ibid.* the notes of Lewin. More of Dōsā's responsa: *Ōsar ha-g. to Shabbāt*, I, nos. 1-2, a fragment of a responsum regarding the end of the Sabbath. *Ōsar ha-g. to Ketubbāt*, 216: "Whoever vows not to talk to some other person" (it is permissible to send him a note); *Ōsar ha-g. to Bāwā qammā*, 14-19, regarding damage done by animals. See in Poznanski, *Hagoren*, 6 (1905/6), 45ff., the matter of oaths and vows: Dōsā testifies about himself that 60 years earlier he had vowed not to eat bread. See five responsa of his, *ibid.*, in the continuation. Hayy Gaon on Dōsā's death: 39, a, line 4, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 41ff.

expressed wishes of his father Samuel b. Hophni. It appears that in the days of Samuel b. Hophni, the son, Israel, was the yeshiva scribe, undoubtedly a very important position. In one of his letters Samuel b. Hophni mentions him: "Israel, our boy, scribe of the yeshiva". Sometimes Israel would write his father's letters, such as the one to the people of Fās, written at the end of the summer of 1004, the end of which states: "I, Israel, son of the head of the yeshiva, send many huge greetings to our two great and noble ones", i.e., he added personal greetings after writing what his father had requested.

There was no smooth sailing in the affairs of the Sura yeshiva in this period. Above we saw Israel's complaints at the time of his predecessor Dōsā, and even after Israel became gaon it appears that there was a party of opponents in Sura. This is implied in a letter Israel wrote in October 1022, i.e., after serving as gaon nearly five years. After promising to fulfill the sender's request for books, he asks for his help, support and defense against his enemies, whose animosity continues to exist despite his efforts to achieve peace; according to him, the conflicts continue and the abatement was only apparent. It may be that the main source of the conflicts was the abiding animosity of the Pumbedita gaon, Hayy b. Sherira. The sons of Berekhiah write, at about 1015, to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, and among other things mention letters (as is implied) of Hayy Gaon (Israel's brother-in-law, having married his sister, the daughter of Samuel b. Hophni) casting a ban on sending monies "to *walad sayyidnā* (the son of our Lord) Samuel, of blessed memory"; they note that the conflict between them was still going on, in the days of Dōsā's gaonate, a number of years before his death and the beginning of Israel's gaonate.

The family of Kohen Šedeq's descendants was still represented in Sura; Israel, in his letters, mentions his cousin Joseph, i.e., Joseph b. Isaac b. Hophni, and refers to him as "Joseph b. Isaac, son of the chief judge, our uncle", and places him at the head of the Surans mentioned in his letter.

I already mentioned the fast ties between the father and the son, Samuel b. Hophni and his son Israel, and Abraham b. ʿAtā, *naḡid* of Qayrawān. A Geniza fragment preserved the preamble of a book written by Israel, on the obligation of prayer, that he wrote for "the distinguished Lord, banner of the faith and crown of the nation.... he dedicated it to him, for so he ordered him, and he obeyed his instruction, and may it stand for him.... as a good feat at God's side". The only information we have about this book is that it contained three chapters. We know nothing about other works of Israel's, but it appears that he had intended to write a commentary on the Talmud: "We have made the decision to write a commentary on the Talmud and will do therein what we have received from our Masters, of blessed memory, and will include what we have taught our students and what we have not taught them", etc.

Of Israel b. Samuel b. Hophni's letters there are in my collection: the fragment of a letter of April 1019, sent to a certain person who was among the heads of the community, whose identity and place of residence are not known; a letter which is a request for a donation for the yeshiva, of January 1021, to one of the sons of Solomon ha-Kohen b. Saadia, who was a *rōsh kallā* (i.e., one of the personalities of the Babylonian yeshivot) and a cantor in Fustat; the fragment of a letter to an unidentified *alūf*, which preserves matters concerning books and a controversy the gaon was embroiled in,

written in October 1022; a letter of an unknown time, to an unidentified community, with statements about the importance of the Oral Law; a letter assumed to be his, to Jacob b. Moses (b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi²⁰), with a mention of his intention to write a commentary on the Talmud, with the recommendation of a certain Abraham b. Solomon, who was carrying the letter.

His main views and what he thought necessary to stress, may be seen in his letter to an unidentified community: the sophistication of the human body is proof of God's wisdom and of the Creation; at the end of days knowledge of God (according to the Jewish faith) will be universal. He counts "ten faces" of God's grace: (1) revelation of the *shekhinā* (God's presence), which may be identical with His 'glories' (the *ṣifāt*—the attributes of the *mu'tazila*?) mentioned in the thirteen attributes (BT *Rōsh Hashānā* 17b); (2) His mercy; (3) the building of the Temple; (4) the placing "in the House of the Lord"; (5) salvation from enemies; (6) sustenance for those He created; (7) responding to prayers; (8) making miracles; (9) accepting those who repent; (10) recompense in the world to come. Further on he lauds the study of Torah and the blessing it carries; he admonishes not to rely only on the written Scripture, but also on the Oral Law, and presents examples of the Sages' ordinances: who is obligated and who is exempted from the pilgrimage; laying the hands upon the sacrifice (Mishnā, *Menāḥot* 9:8); obligatory precepts incumbent upon women.

From the few sources at our disposal, we can sense the great pressures, even nerve-wracking, on Israel ha-Kohen Gaon; he had been forced to contend with his predecessor in the gaonate, Dōsā b. Saadia, who was much older than he; with Hayy Gaon, head of the yeshiva of Pumbedita at that time; and apparently he also had to contend with competition from the Palestinian yeshiva. In a fragment of a letter to the leader of a community, not much of which can be deciphered, the salient words are "and draw them to us and do not let up"—an explicit call to keep up the public relations in his favor and for the sake of the yeshiva in Sura.

In a Damascus manuscript of the Bible, completed in AD 1382 and belonging to Elisha b. Benvenisti Ibn Crescas, we read among the dates of death: "...and the son (of) our Lord Samuel ha-Kohen Gaon died on the eve of a Thursday in the month of Kislev in the year 1345". It may be that the day of the month was omitted, but if the intention was 5 Kislev, then the date of his death was 30 October 1033. In a letter of a Ramla man who spent many years in Baghdad, it was said that his grave is in al-Anbār "on the mountain", i.e., in the vicinity of Pumbedita.

From this point the information about Sura is very sparse. According to a memorial list in the Geniza, the next gaon was °AZARIAH HA-KOHEN B. ISRAEL B. SAMUEL B. HOPHNI. His son, Josiah ha-Kohen, is a witness in a deed in the handwriting of Daniel b. °Azariah: "Josiah ha-Kohen son of his great honor our holy Lord and Master °Azariah ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva of the city of Maḥsiya". °Azariah ha-Kohen, gaon of Sura, married the sister of Daniel b. °Azariah (scion of the exilarchic dynasty, who was gaon in Palestine; obviously there were two °Azariahs, one of the exilarchic dynasty, father of Daniel, and the other °Azariah ha-Kohen b. Israel, father of Josiah). "Josiah b. °Azariah ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, of blessed memory", is mentioned also in the Abiathar scroll.

However, aside from this, we have no information about ʿAzariah ha-Kohen. It may be assumed that in the autumn of 1033, he inherited his father Israel's position. After him, in the memorial list we see the name of ISAAC GAON OF MAḤSIYA, about whom we have no information.²²²

11. *The geonim of Pumbedita: From Šemaḥ b. Kafnai to Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq*

(223) Let us return to the affairs of Pumbedita. We saw that the gaon Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph died at the beginning of summer in 953. Afterwards, the gaon was ŠEMAḤ B. KAFNAI. Sherira Gaon, in his *Letter*, notes that he served as gaon two-and-a-half years and died "on Rōsh (apparently meaning: Rosh Hashana) in the year (Sel.) 1249", i.e., in September 937. Before becoming gaon, he served as chief judge (apparently of Pumbedita) at the time of the gaon Kohen Šedeq; David b. Zakkai mentions him at the beginning of a letter he wrote at about 915: "Šemaḥ, chief judge, b. Kafnai, son of a head of the yeshiva", after mentioning Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai, "head of the yeshiva of the city of Maḥsiya". First of all, let us note that Šemaḥ was the grandson of the head of a yeshiva, whom we cannot identify, Kafnai's father. Secondly, we have no way of deciding with certainty where he was chief judge, whether in Sura, for he was mentioned immediately after the Sura gaon, or perhaps in

²²² Abū'l-Aʿlā Israel, see 145, line 41. The agreement and Dōsā's promise: 60; the scribe of the yeshiva: 51, b, line 1. The letter to Fās: 49, b, lines 8-9; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/8), 364. The controversies in Sura: 64, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 62, and the note *ibid.*, 536. Hayy Gaon: 146, a, lines 10-12. The request of the sons of Berekhiah regarding Samuel b. Hophni's books is also mentioned in 145, lines 41-42. Joseph b. Isaac: 63, a, line 4; 65, b, line 9. Book on the prayer obligation: TS H 11.1, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 415. The commentary to the Talmud: 66, lines 22-23. His letter to Jacob b. Moses, apparently Jacob b. Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi, cf. 143, a, a court writ of 1034; Jacob b. Moses died at about 1030. The identity of the writer of 66 is assumed, on the basis of the style, cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 186. Israel's letters: 62-66. Also preserved is a sheet from a quire, where written below is "Israel ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, b. Samuel ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, b. Hophni head of the yeshiva [of the Diaspora] b. Kohen Šedeq", which appears to be some kind of writing exercise; it was edited by Marmorstein, *REJ*, 70 (1920), 99; also preserved is a fragment in Israel's handwriting, from the end of a letter, from Iyar, Sel. 1338, April-May 1027, with what was apparently a request for a donation to the yeshiva: TS 10 J 32, f. 11; the final lines were published by Ben-Sasson, *Tarbiz*, 56 (1986/7), 206f. The letter to the community: 65, d, and its continuation; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 154, who therein found a jibe at the Karaites, i.e., an emphasis on the importance of the Oral Law. Some halachic comments remaining from Israel Gaon: he permitted a *sukkā* to be at the edge of a roof, see *Oṣar ha-g. to Sukkā*, 7, and see quotations *ibid.*, 24, 28f.; "draw them to us": 62, line 16. His death: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 189, and see there in the Introduction, p. xxif. His grave: 86, a, line 10. The memorial list (mention of ʿAzariah and Isaac): TS 6 K 2, f. 2r, line 11, ed. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 419f., and see the discussion *ibid.*, 416ff. The deed: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 715 (no. 390), b, lines 2-4; the Abiathar scroll: Gil, *ibid.*, III, 397 (no. 559), line 6. See furthermore on Josiah ha-Kohen and his father ʿAzariah: Gil, *Hist.*, 723f. See Mann, *Texts*, II, 1461, who quotes the Psalms commentary, MS Firkovich II, no. 1430, mentioning the "head of the yeshiva Isaac b. Asher, of blessed memory", according to whom chapter 77 was interpreted; Mann notes there that he may have been Isaac Gaon, of Sura, but he may also have been Isaac ha-Kohen b. al-Awānī, head of the Baghdad yeshiva in a much later period (*infra*, sec. 268).

Pumbedita—if so, there is room for wondering why David b. Zakkai did not mention the gaon of Pumbedita, the possible reason being: because at that time there was a controversy, and the gaon of Pumbedita (Judah b. Samuel?) refused to recognize David b. Zakkai as the exilarch. Nevertheless, since we have seen that Šemaḥ was the grandson of a gaon, it may be that he had the same name as his grandfather, and was thus the grandson of the gaon of Sura Šemaḥ b. Ḥayyim (879-886); yet he may be identical to Šemaḥ b. Shahīn, of whom Nathan the Babylonian says that he was a candidate to become Sura gaon, i.e., to inherit his grandfather's(?) position, and was passed over in favor of Saadia b. Joseph. If so, this may be a case of a Sura man who became gaon of Pumbedita.

After Šemaḥ b. Kafnai's death, ḤANANIAH B. JUDAH became gaon in "Tevet of the year (Sel.) 1249", i.e., December 937. Ḥananiah was Sherira Gaon's father. He served as gaon five-and-a-half years, "and died in the year (Sel.) 1254", i.e., 943, in the summer. Ḥananiah's brother, Nathan *alūf* b. Judah, was a candidate to become gaon of Sura, when this yeshiva faced closure because of its dire economic condition, but he died before the appointment (above, sec. 144). Ḥananiah's mother was the daughter of the gaon Isaac Šemaḥ b. Palṭoi (above, secs. 199, 205), thus Ḥananiah, on his mother's side, was a descendant of Palṭoi b. Abayē. He married the daughter of Mīshoi (Mīshawai, Moses) *rōsh kallā* b. Isaac Šādōq. Mīshoi was the gaon Isaac Šemaḥ's scribe. Therefore, Ḥananiah Gaon's brother-in-law was ʿAmram b. Mīshoi *rōsh kallā*. This ʿAmram was the chief judge of Pumbedita and should have been gaon after Ḥananiah, but was passed over in favor of Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, as we shall see.

Not much has been preserved of Ḥananiah's heritage in the area of *halākhā*, but it is clear that his son Sherira, and his grandson Hayy, absorbed his teachings. For example, ascribed to Ḥananiah Gaon is a responsum regarding *ketubbōt* that were lost during an assault by gentiles, and the writer of the query complains that when the *ketubbā* was reconstructed, there was a great exaggeration of the sums stipulated. The gaon rules that a *ketubbā* must be reconstructed immediately, and that it be formulated according to the lesser sums of *ketubbōt* remaining in the community's possession, or one had to rely on the memory of local elders, and to make sure that the date of the *ketubbā* is in accordance with the birth of the eldest son, for obvious reasons. Whereas in a responsum of Sherira Gaon's to the people of Qayrawān, he rules that there should be a compromise, and an estimate, and notes: "My Master, my father the gaon, and the gaon my grandfather (a version: his grandfather, which apparently should be corrected as Harkavy suggested) their repose be in Paradise, would do as we did". True, this contradicts the above version, but as Harkavy has explained, the circumstances were different. Also, in decisions of the grandson, Hayy Gaon, there is (regarding a levirate marriage case where the widow died), "the citation in the name of our grandfather the gaon, ...does not fit our view", i.e., he differs from the decisions ascribed to his grandfather Ḥananiah Gaon.²²³

²²³ Šemaḥ b. Kafnai: Sherira, *Letter*, 120. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, skips over him. The letter of David b. Zakkai: 10, a, lines 4-5. Šemaḥ b. Shahīn: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 80. Cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 22ff. Šemaḥ b. Kafnai is mentioned along with Yehūdai (it appears that it should be written: Yehūdā b. Samuel; gaon of Pumbedita, 905-917) regarding

(224) In the summer of 943, after the death of the gaon Ḥananiah b. Judah, AARON HA-KOHEN B. JOSEPH, I.E., KHALAF B. SARJĀDA, became gaon. In the chapter on the controversies (above, secs. 144-147) I dealt at length with the struggles in which he was embroiled. As we have seen, Sherira Gaon stressed that he was not one of the yeshiva scholars, but a merchant. Mevasser Gaon was the one who had appointed him to sit in the *dārā rabbā* (the great row) of the yeshiva (which probably means: appointed him as *rōsh kallā*), and according to Sherira Gaon he was not fit to be appointed as gaon. Statements such as this, certainly from what he had read in Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, were written by Abraham Ibn Da'ūd in the *Book of Tradition*. Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph died at the end of the year Sel. 1271, i.e., August 960.

Aaron ha-Kohen was the author of a commentary on the second half of Deuteronomy, from 15:18, thus continuing Saadia Gaon's commentary. This commentary is mentioned in a number of places, and fragments of it have been preserved in the Geniza under different titles, and it was apparently circulated in quires by the name of the pericope, such as the *daftar* (quire) of 'judges and officers' (Deut. 16:18) by Ibn Sarjāda". Ibn Bil'am, in his commentary on Deuteronomy 21:14, says: "I have seen in the commentary on this chapter of Master Aaron b. Sarjāda" etc. Or: "the commentary on (the pericope) *kī tēšē* ('when you goest forth', Deut. 21:10 to 28:19), bound, of our Master Aaron b. Sarjāda ha-Kohen, and also the commentary on *zō't ha-berākhā* ('And this is the blessing', Deut. 33:1 to 34:12), his as well". Also: "A shortened commentary to *attem niššāvīm* (ye stand this day, Deut. 29:9[10]-30:20) of our Master Aaron son of our Master Joseph, of blessed memory, Sarjād(!)". "A treatise written by the head of the yeshiva Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph for his father-in-law (Bishr b. Aaron) when he asked him for a commentary of *zō't ha-berākhā*" (cf. above in this section). In the commentary of Tanhūm ha-Yerushalmī to that same pericope, the blessing for Joseph, Deut. 33:13: "for the dew and for the deep that coucheth beneath", it says: "our Master Aaron ha-Kohen accepted what was said in the Targum (apparently 'the Jerusalemite'): blessed be his land by God, in all that concerns the rain from heaven and all that concerns the dew and all that is beneath, i.e., that the roots of the plants reach to the water that is beneath, meaning: they shall enjoy both the water from heaven and that from the abyss".

"the precept of *ḥališā*" (which must be fulfilled in the presence of three). See *Ōsar ha-g. to Yevāmōt*, 199 (no. 481). Ḥananiah Gaon: Sherira, *Letter*, 120. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 120, with conflicting dates. Nathan the Babylonian had no knowledge of the existence of the father, Judah b. Samuel, neither of the son, Ḥananiah, cf. Poznanski, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/3), 401; about Ḥananiah cf. also: Rosenthal, *Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 (1983-86), 596. Loss of the *ketubbōt*: *Resp. Sha'arē s.*, 56aff., nos. 16, 17. Sherira Gaon's responsum to the people of Qayrawān: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 97f., no. 210; *ibid.*, 397; cf. Aptowitz, *Chajes Mem. Vol.*, 49 (in an article dealing with "responsa ascribed to Rav Ḥananiah, which are not his"). Sherira Gaon mentions a responsum of his father Ḥananiah, regarding collecting a *ketubbā* debt in moveable goods, see Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 458f., and Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 1 (1921/2), 71: "we have a responsum of Rav Ḥanina Gaon of blessed memory, our Lord and Master my father, regarding a late debt" etc. The version is from Bodl MS Heb Cat. 2643, no. 26. Responsum of Hayy Gaon: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 48 (no. 80) and see Harkavy's note *ibid.*, 354; it is included in *Ōsar ha-g. to Yevāmōt*, 61ff. (no. 153).

Aaron ha-Kohen wrote also a commentary to the Talmud treatise *Yevāmōt*. The opening phrase of a responsum listed in the index of a volume of responsa from the Geniza, is: "we found in our Lord and Master's Aaron, the saying about a deed of refusal"; it belongs to a query presented by Jacob b. Nissim to Sherira Gaon. A responsum of his on matters of levirate marriage is also preserved, where among other details we find that in his day one used to force the husband to divorce his wife if she so demanded, and if he refused he was under a ban; only if there was some chance of reconciling them, was the ban postponed for a week or two. Similarly, the brother-in-law was forced to give the *ḥaliṣā* if his sister-in-law refused to marry him.

There is a responsum of his, beginning: "this query came to us at the Gate of the yeshiva of the Diaspora to the house of our Lord Aaron ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*" etc.; one should note the formulae yeshiva of the Diaspora and the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, in one breath. The query concerned the release from vows, and in the responsum there is the sentence: "since we learned from knowledgeable geonim in whose service we were, that there is no release from vows in this time".

A responsum of Aaron Gaon's listing forty-three types of people unfit to testify is mentioned in one of the responsa ascribed to Sherira Gaon: "as to your question about those forty-three counted by our Lord and Master Aaron Gaon, of blessed memory, regarding those who are not fit for testifying whether they have an addendum or a limitation, may our Lords teach us: by your life, we do not know why there are forty-three, yet we count what we see", etc.

Also mentioned is a reservation of Sherira Gaon's regarding Aaron Gaon's statements made in public, before the scholars, during the *kallā*: Aaron Gaon claimed that it is the gold coins which are *ḥiv'ā*, i.e., they are those which are in general circulation in places like Egypt or Sarandīb (Ceylon), therefore, in an exchange between gold and silver, silver is to be considered the merchandise. Sherira Gaon, on the other hand, represented the opposite view: "according to what myself and the scholars were told at the *kallā*, and was discussed by us again, not such is the law", etc.

A book of Aaron Gaon's which is not known from another source, is mentioned in the letter of the Ramla man who lived in Baghdad for twenty years, who wrote to Nehorai b. Nissim in about 1100. When seeking to show how much time he was still spending on study, he mentions "the *kitāb al-mā'ānī*, ('book of meanings'), of the head of the yeshiva b. Sarjāda, may his repose be in Paradise". Although the word *kitāb*, book, has not been preserved, one may assume that it was there.²²⁴

²²⁴ Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph: Sherira, *Letter*, 120f. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 43; Commentary to Deuteronomy: the brief commentary (*tankith*): Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/1), 426f., cites BL Or 5554B, f. 3; *shōḥēfēm we-shōḥerēm* (pericope beginning Deut. 16:18: "Judges and officers shalt thou make"): TS 10 K 20, f. 9, in Mann, *Texts*, I, 653; Ibn Bil'am, see Poznanski, *JQR*, NS (1922/3), 377 who has more references to a commentary of Aaron Gaon, in Ibn Ezra and in Tanhūm ha-Yerushalmī. The commentary to *kī tēšē* (beginning Deut. 21:10: "when thou goes forth to war"): Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 38 (1962/3), 554, and see also TS NS J 126: *tamām* (the completion) of Ibn Sarjāda's *kī tēšē*. And this is the blessing: *we-zō't ha-berākāhā* (beginning Deut. 33:1). See Mann, *Texts*, 647 (TS Loan 149); Tanhūm ha-Yerushalmī, see Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam yesh.*, 221; Zucker, *Pērūshē*, 12 n. 7, notes that there is also in the Geniza a commentary of Aaron Gaon's to Jacob's blessing which he attached

(225) After Aaron Gaon's death in August 960, NEHEMIAH B. KOHEN SEDEQ became gaon; he died in Sel. 1279, 968. Some of his letters and fragments of letters have been preserved, of which most of the information deals with the controversy between Aaron Gaon and Sherira and their parties; I have already dealt with this in the chapter on the controversies (above, secs. 146-147).

After Nehemiah Gaon's death, the period of the gaonates of SHERIRA B. HANANIAH and his son, HAYY, begins. Their period, which lasted seventy years, should be seen as the zenith of the activities of the Pumbedita yeshiva. The Jewish diasporas, to the extent of our knowledge, then recognized this yeshiva as the most worthy institution of leadership, and requests for guidance, advice and rulings came from all of the diasporas. Even the most vigorous focus of competition, the Palestinian yeshiva, was forced to acknowledge Pumbedita's supremacy, as is made so cogent by the fact (and there must have been other facts) that the son of the Palestinian gaon, Yaḥyā b. Solomon b. Judah was sent to study with Hayy Gaon. However, this significant acknowledgement of spiritual supremacy did not prevent the struggle with Pumbedita for influence in the communities and the distribution of funds, as is well known from the letters of Solomon b. Judah, the Palestinian gaon.

Nehemiah Gaon's death ended a period in which Sherira and his party had seceded and did not recognize the former's gaonate. I have already dealt with the relations between Sherira and his party and Nehemiah Gaon, in the chapter on the controversies. We do not know with certainty whether Sherira, during the rest of Nehemiah's gaonate, had filled the position of chief judge, that was filled by the gaon's brother, Hophni; Hophni died, as we have seen, before his brother Nehemiah. Matters are not made much clearer by a fragment of a letter to a *rōsh kallā*, apparently written by

to his commentary to Moses' blessing (Deut. 33:11; but without indicating a reference). Also see TS 8 Fa 1, f. 4, the explanation of the leap year by Joseph b. Judah *rōsh ha-seder al-Mahdawī* (=of Maḥdiyya) who cites Aaron Gaon's commentary to *we-zō't ha-berākāhā*, in H. Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 16 (1903/4), 962; on the scale of the commentary see that which was cited in 1211 by Joseph *rōsh ha-seder* b. Jacob in his introduction to his commentary on the *ḥafṣārōt*, which he drew (among others) from the commentary "from *shōfēfīm* to the end of the Pentateuch of our Master Aaron b. Sargādō" see in Mann, *Jews*, II, 310 and see the citations from Aaron Gaon in Ibn Ezra's commentary, see in the Weiser edition, I, 103, 127; II, 127, 352; III, 54f. Commentary to *Yevāmōt*: TS Loan 104, in Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 67 and cf. Malter, *Saadia*, 113 n. 241 (in my article in *Sefunōt*, NS 1 [1979/80], 17, I noted erroneously: commentary to *Ketubbōt*); regarding the refusal, see BT *Yevāmōt*, 107aff. The responsum regarding levirate marriage: Assaf, *Yeschurun* (Berlin) 6 (1924/5), 50-54, taken from ULC Add 474 and see its description in Schechter, *JQR*, 4 (1892), 90; it was printed also in *Ōsar ha-g.*, to *Yevāmōt*, 70ff., no. 170. On the matter of vows: *Resp. Hemdā gen.*, no. 37, and a more detailed version in *Ōsar ha-g.*, to *Nedārīm*, 44ff. (no. 117); also see the sources there in note 9, cf. Poznanski, *JQR*, NS 3 (1912/3), 408; Aptowitz, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1929/30 [4]), 80, concludes from this that Aaron Gaon was one of Sura's students, because it is its scholars who were those who opposed vow release; cf. the responsum of Hayy b. Naḥshōn, *Ōsar ha-g.*, to *Nedārīm*, 23, no. 66. Aptowitz, *ibid.*, 135, found a definite way of identifying the responsa of Aaron Gaon; they begin with the formula: "this is the way the matter is seen by us". Disqualified from giving testimony: Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 116 (MS Mosseri II no. 3 = V.200.1). Gold and silver, see Mishnā, *Bāvā meṣ'ā*, ch. IV, and see the *gemārā* discussion there, BT *ibid.*, 44aff.; see the controversy between Aaron Gaon and Sherira (when he was apparently chief judge of Pumbedita) cited by Zechariah ha-Aghmāṭī, who copied from Isaac b. Judah Ibn Ghayyāth, in Leveen, *Tractates*, 99a; cf. Abramson, *ʿInyānōt*, 95. The letter to Nehorai: 85, a, in the right-hand margin.

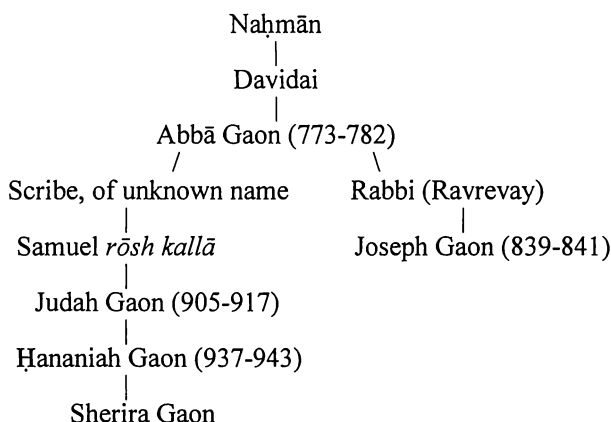
Nehemiah Gaon, with a discussion regarding a woman who had lost her *ketubbā*; Nehemiah Gaon did not know that his predecessor, Ḥananiah Gaon, had already dealt with this issue. Indeed we have seen that (above, sec. 223) Ḥananiah dealt with the *halākhā* regarding such cases. Ḥananiah's dealing with this issue became known to Nehemiah Gaon only after the arrival of "a messenger from the son of the head of the yeshiva, of blessed memory"; i.e.—it should be understood—Ḥananiah's son, i.e., Sherira, sent a messenger to the gaon requesting that the *ketubbā* be handed over to him, apparently because his father Ḥananiah had dealt with it; however, the gaon decided what he decided and refused to send him the *ketubbā*. This act, and also the gaon's refraining from mentioning Sherira's name, but calling him "the son of the head of the yeshiva", show that at that time Sherira was a seceder.²²⁵

12. *The geonim Sherira and Hayy*

(226) SHERIRA GAON was the scion of a family a number of whose descendants had been heads of the Babylonian yeshivot, the best known being his grandfather, Judah Gaon, and his own father Ḥananiah Gaon. Sherira's lineage reaches back to Rabbā Bar Abūh, the student of Rav's, who was one of the people of Nehardēa in the second half of the third century AD, and passed to Māhōzē when the Palmyrenes destroyed Nehardēa; Sherira refers to him as "our grandfather", and notes: "we are of the family of the *nāsī* (i.e., the exilarchic family), of the lineage of Rabbā Bar Abūh". Yet already in the second half of the sixth century, i.e., about two generations before the Arab conquest, there is mention of "our ancestor Marī, son of Rav Dīmī, our forefather", who probably were of the *sāvōrā'im*. There were family ties between Samuel, grandson of Rābā and his descendants, and Sherira's antecedents. The Samuel who was gaon of Sura ("he was from our yeshiva of Pum Bedita, descendent of Amimār"; 730-748). "Our Lord and Master Abbā our ancestor, son of our Lord and Master Davidai, our forefather", was the Abbā who was gaon of Pumbedita (773-782), and Davidai his father was apparently one of the antecedents of Davidai (b. Abbā) *rōsh kallā*, who was "our elder Master Davidai *rōsh*

²²⁵ Letters of Nehemiah b. Kohen Sedeq, see 14, a fragment, with an unidentified addressee; 15, apparently to the community of the 'Babylonians' in Fustat; 16, to Nisin b. Benajamin, in Sāfāqūs; 17, a fragment, to an unidentified addressee in Fustat; 18, a fragment, likewise. Also belonging to it, apparently, is a fragment of a letter edited by Assaf—see below in this note. On the relations between the Pumbedita yeshiva and the Palestinian yeshiva, see Gil, *Hist.*, 527f.; also see there references to sources and other studies. The relations between Nehemiah Gaon and Sherira and his party, were summarized well by Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 175f. In note 92, Mann discusses the issue of the lost *ketubbā*, which is included in fragment Mosseri R. MC 4, edited by Assaf, *Mi-sifr. Ha-g.*, 99f. (This fragment is not contained in the microfilms at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library, Jerusalem). His conclusion, that Sherira was then chief judge, is unfounded; true, in 20, a letter written by Sherira during Nehemiah's gaonate (lines 20-21), we read: "we sit from morning to evening judging... them and teaching them whether separately or in groups", but from here it may be gathered that Sherira and his party maintained separate activities, not necessarily meaning (as Mann believed), that he was made chief judge of the yeshiva. See the above note in Mann, his argument with Assaf regarding the nature of the fragment.

kallā.... who led you and dealt with your affairs regarding the authority”, as we read in a letter of Sherira Gaon’s (or of his son, Hayy), to the communities of northern Babylonia: “the authority of Halah and Habor (Biblical names of places in northern Assyria; Ḥulwān and Ḥadayib) and their environs”; “these are included in our authority” It is clearly felt that this is an ancient authority. Regarding Abbā’s grandson, the gaon Joseph b. Rabbi (839-841), Sherira says: “our cousin, the grandson of our Lord and Master Abbā Gaon, our forefather”; clearly, he was not an actual cousin of Sherira’s, but apparently of Samuel *rōsh kallā*, father of Judah, Sherira’s grandfather. Sherira’s grandfather’s grandfather was the yeshiva scribe at the time of Joseph b. Abbā (814-816); the son of this yeshiva scribe was Samuel *rōsh kallā* (above, sec. 201), father of Judah Gaon (905-917), who was the father of Ḥananiah Gaon (937-943), who was Sherira’s father. This would be Sherira’s family tree, on the male side:

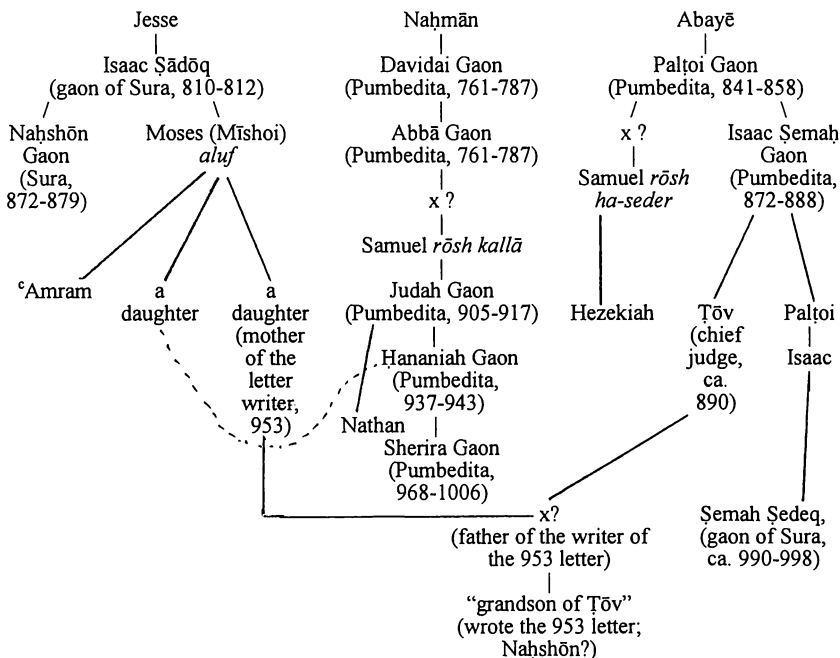


The female side of the family should mainly be understood according to the lineage of Palṭoi b. Abayē, i.e., Palṭoi, gaon of Pumbedita (841-858). We know of two sons of Palṭoi, the one, Isaac Ṣemaḥ, the gaon (872-888), the other anonymous, father of Samuel *rōsh ha-seder*, who was Samuel, father of Hezekiah. We know of two sons of Isaac Ṣemaḥ, the one, Palṭoi, the other, Ṭōv, chief judge of the Court (ca. 890), and a daughter. This daughter married Judah Gaon (see the above chart) and was the mother of Ḥananiah Gaon (as above). As to Palṭoi b. Isaac Ṣemaḥ, he was the father of Isaac, and grandfather of Ṣemaḥ Ṣedeq gaon of Sura (in the last decade of the tenth century). Another son of Judah’s, Nathan, was a candidate to become head of the yeshiva, but he died. Ṭōv, chief judge of the Court, was the grandfather of the writer of the 953 letter, a personality of the Pumbedita yeshiva, writing, apparently, to Aspāmiya, i.e., Christian Spain. Further along we find the tie to a family of the Sura geonim, descendants of the gaon Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Jesse (810-812). We know of two of his sons: Naḥshōn Gaon (872-879) and Moses (Mishoi). Among Moses’ descendants were ʿAmram, chief judge of the Court, and two daughters: one was the mother of the writer of the 953 letter, from the marriage mentioned above—the son of Ṭōv, chief judge of the Court, son of the gaon Isaac Ṣemaḥ, and the other, who married Ḥananiah Gaon, was Sherira’s mother.

Thus there is a tripartite tie: descendants of Palṭoi b. Abayē—descendants of Isaac Ṣādōq—descendants of Abbā b. Davidai. Thus the writer of the 953 letter was the cousin (on his mother's side) of Sherira Gaon; his name may have been Naḥshōn, and he is referred to as 'Kaḥshōn' (a sobriquet based on a root meaning: to deceive; just as Sherira was referred to as 'Shevīrā', a sobriquet whose root means: to break) in the scurrilous letter written by Nehemiah Gaon b. Kohen Ṣedeq (above, sec. 147). One should also note that Sherira's family had an emblem, a lion (the emblem of the tribe of Judah), as is known from some Geniza fragments.

In his *Letter*, Sherira notes that his early antecedents were of the exilarchic dynasty: "our forefathers belonged to the house of the *nesī'im*"; but they left their involvement with the exilarchy, severed their ties with the descendants of the family of the exilarchs and joined the camp of yeshiva scholars: "but they deserted all those evil behaviors of the *nesī'im*, and joined the yeshiva scholars". This took place some generations before the Arab conquest: "nor are we the offspring of Bustanai; our ancestors rather earlier joined the scholars of the yeshivot". In his letter to the people of northern Babylonia, Sherira writes about the "house of Kafnai" (father of Bustanai), who had half of Babylonia in their authority, and it is felt that this house had no connection, either with Sherira or his antecedents.

Sherira Gaon's Lineage and his Family Ties



Sherira was born at about 906, according to what Abraham Ibn Da'ūd writes, saying that "he lived a long life, for his life was about one-hundred years". Thus he was sixty-two when he became gaon, in 968. The year of

his death, according to an addendum to his *Letter*, that was copied by Elisha Crescas, was Sel. 1317, and he died in Tishri, which began in that year on 8 September 1005. However, in a letter written by his son, Hayy Gaon, on 11 August 1006, there appears the following sentence: "our diadem, the great gaon our father, may he live forever", i.e., Sherira was then still living, thus the year of his death should be corrected to Sel. 1318. In a letter Hayy Gaon wrote on 9 February 1007, he mentions "and the death of our diadem the gaon our father". Whereas, in a memorial list in the Geniza, we find that Sherira Gaon died on 8 Tishri. Thus the correct date of his death would be 3 September 1006 (8 Tishri Sel. 1318).

In fact, this date is in accord with what is stated in the above addendum to Sherira Gaon's *Letter*: "the total of his reign was 38", which is the number of years from 968 to 1006. Benjamin of Tudela mentions his grave, in Sura, something which is inconceivable.

An important way station in Sherira Gaon's activity was the appointment of his son, Hayy, as the yeshiva's chief judge. According to the addendum in the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon that I have mentioned above, it took place in the year Sel. 1298, which was 987 (the year when Sherira Gaon wrote his historical *Letter*); from the bottom fragment of a letter written by Sherira and Hayy, apparently to the head of the Palestinian yeshiva, we learn that by 18 July 989, Hayy was indeed already chief judge of the Court: "...also from me, Hayy chief judge of the Court, son of the head of the yeshiva.... myriads of greetings". Sherira gaon, in his *Letter* is explicit: "In the year (Sel.) 1279 I was appointed gaon and I appointed our son, Hayy, chief judge, two years ago". That is, Hayy became chief judge of the Court two years before Sherira wrote the *Letter*, i.e., in 985, Sel. 1296, not in 1298 as is stated in the above addendum. In the year Sel. 1315, i.e., 1004, while his father was still living, "(Hayy) was appointed to the gaonate", when Sherira was about ninety-eight.

It is clear that Sherira studied with and was prepared by, his grandfather, Judah: "this is how we learnt from our enlightener, our Master Judah, our grandfather, of blessed memory".²²⁶

²²⁶ See the references to Sherira's ancestors, in his *Letter*, 60, 82, 100 (and see the editor's note 2, more quotations about Dīmī and Marī), 104, 105, 110, 112, 113, 114, 117, 119, 120, 121; and see Davidai *rōsh kallā*: 28, i, line 19; Halah and Habor: 2 Ki 18:11, cf. BT, *Qiddūshin* 72a, *Yevāmōt*, 16b-17a; (in printed versions: *hlzwn* and it should be *hlwwn*). Bēt Kafnai, see 28, x, line 17. On Halah and Habor, see the discussion in Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 21ff., 146ff. See in Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, II, 86: "and he (the exilarch) has another place, called Hulwān, there is between it and Babylon (=Baghdad) a five-day distance and from there he receives 150 dinars ('gold pieces')". See the letter of the anonymous "grandson of Tōv" (Naḥshōn?) from the year 953: 13, d, lines 4-20, e, lines 1-6, 12-17. The lion: see 61, which is a fragment of a copy of a deed written at Hayy Gaon's court, with the signature "Hayy bar Sherira, the Lion will teach us righteousness". Cf. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 43f.: "I saw the seal (of Hayy Gaon), sealed on sheets that he would send, upon which was engraved a lion as was on the flag of the camp of Judah and the flags of the kings of Judah". One-hundred years: *ibid.*, 43; the addendum to Sherira's *Letter*: Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 103; his grave: Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 46; Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 189; the letters of Hayy Gaon: 37 (b), a, line 49; 38, a, line 13. The Geniza fragment: TS 6 K 2, f. 2, cf. Lewin, *Rav Sherira Gaon*, 27 (Harkavy and Lewin did not know of these data from the Geniza); Mann, *Texts*, I, 109, note 2. Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 44: Hayy became gaon in AM 4758, AD 998, see the comments of the editor (G. Cohen) in the English section, 60, note 202: Ibn Da'ūd sought to laud Hayy Gaon and give him 40 years in the gaonate, see Abraham Ibn Da'ūd *ibid.*, 44:

(227) We know about Sherira's marriage from a letter that he wrote when he was still the yeshiva's chief judge, in the summer of 962, to one of the Fustat notables. He states that the addressee's brother, *alūf* of the yeshiva, "is like our brother and is our best man". Sherira was about fifty-eight when he wrote the letter, and his marriage had certainly taken place many years earlier, perhaps in the 30s of the tenth century, or even earlier.

On his son, Hayy, I write in what follows; here it should be mentioned that we know that Sherira also had a daughter (perhaps more than one daughter, but we have no more information), whom I mentioned in the discussion of the ties with Europe (above, sec. 133); yet doubts regarding this issue would not be without justification.

After Sherira became gaon, most of his efforts were invested in strengthening Pumbedita's status as the leading and central yeshiva, both in Babylonia and in the diasporas. These efforts project from some of his letters to the people of Qayrawān and the Maghrib, clearly written shortly after he became gaon. His responsa display a sense of security on the justice of his ideas, such as his responsum regarding the ruling about a woman who took an oath and then did not fulfil it, whether she leaves without her *ketubbā* being paid out; "this is not the way we think about it... these are documents which mean nothing... we never came across somebody who acted, but as we explained". His responsum regarding a child who becomes orphaned of his father and his mother and the grandparents on both sides fight over him; and his responsum regarding prayer in Aramaic (above, sec. 180).

The Pumbedita yeshiva, in his day (as in a number of prior generations) was not in its ancient location, but in Baghdad. Proof of this is in a deed drawn up in October 997, "in Baghdad's *ʿattiqā* (ancient) market", signed by Sherira, head of the yeshiva. Thus also in a responsum of Sherira's: "all this (alleviations in issues of impurity and immersing in the *miqwē*) were the custom of the scholars who were in Neharde'a, also in Sura (as it should be read?) and in Pumbedita; however, now that we have gathered in Baghdad the great city" etc. "one decided to be more strict".

From 985, when Hayy was appointed as chief judge of Pumbedita, the two of them are often mentioned together in responsa, for example: "this query was presented before us at the Gate of the yeshiva of the Diaspora before our Lord Hayy head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* son of our Lord Sherira head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, who read it and we gave the order to write a responsum to it. It was also lifted up to the great Court before our Lord Sherira head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, who read it and ordered to sign the confirmation of the responsum" etc. Further: "this query was presented before us at the Gate of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, before the two great courts of Israel to the Court of our Lord Sherira head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our Lord Ḥananiah head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*" etc. Also: "these queries.... were presented before us at the Gate of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, before the two great courts of all of Israel, of our Lord Sherira head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our

"and their gaonate was 70 years, Rav Sherira 30 years, and Rav Hayy 40 years". See Lewin (above, in this note), 24, 25 n. 4. The time of Hayy's appointment as chief judge: Sherira, *Letter*, 121; as gaon: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 198. His instruction by Judah gaon: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 195 (no. 377).

Lord Ḥananiah.... and of our Lord Hayy chief judge of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, son of our Lord Sherira”.

The first version above may be a corruption of the copier, for it can not be assumed that the two of them, the father and the son, were each called head of the yeshiva while Sherira was still active, before his retirement. Possibly, it was written after his retirement, before his death, when both of them may have been referred to as heads of the yeshiva. Or, that in the mind of the copier, relatively later, Hayy naturally had the same status of head of the yeshiva, like his father. It would not be too far-fetched to assume that at the Pumbedita yeshiva they had indeed instituted, at a time we cannot define, two courts—one of them ‘lower’, of the chief judge, the other ‘superior’, of the gaon.

In my collection seventeen letters and fragments of letters of Sherira Gaon are printed; some of them written together with his son. The period when they were written is spread over some forty years, from the early 60s of the tenth century, to the beginning of the eleventh century. The first two letters are from the period of the controversy at the Pumbedita yeshiva, when there was enmity between the party of Nehemiah ha-Kohen Gaon, son of Kohen Šedeq, and Sherira's party. Then Sherira wrote letters to diaspora communities seeking financial support for himself and his party. When he became gaon, it appears that he maintained fast ties with the communities. Preserved are mainly his letters to the Maghrib, but also letters to Fustat, Yemen, northern Iraq and Palestine. Included in the letters is also a copy of an act of the above court sitting in Baghdad, in October 997. In his letters he spared no flowery words and formulae of praise and friendship towards the addressees, such as in the last of the letters printed in my collection: “....and announcing that we will always tell of your praise and commend you incessantly; in the chambers of our imagery (Ez. 8:12) we will speak about you, and our memories of you will come before us like bread and drink and hover like the air we breathe. For it is clear before our God that we love you with the love of brothers and consider you as old friends and the pact made between us keeps all of its laws standing and packed before our eyes always and will never be erased....”. And: “...as we supplicate (God) for ourselves so we do for you, and as we pray for our children so we pray for you....”.²²⁷

²²⁷ Reference to the marriage: 20 lines 25f. Cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 85, who believed that the marriage took place during the gaonate of Sherira's father, Ḥananiah, i.e. prior to 943, the year of Ḥananiah Gaon's death; but then Sherira was about 40, and this letter contains no evidence that his marriage did not take place long before then. The letters after he became gaon: see especially 23 and 24. See on the efforts to consolidate Pumbedita's status: Lewin, *Rav Sherira Gaon*, 4ff.; the fragment of the deed: 29, cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 468. “Baghdad the great city”: Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 206. References to the father and his son: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 88 (no. 198); *ibid.*, 187 (no. 371), cf. Bodl MS Heb 47, f. 4; Assaf, *Resp.* (1942), 102; also cf. Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 11f. who saw therein a permanent characteristic of the yeshivot, that they had two courts, of the chief judge and of the gaon, relying on what was published by Harkavy. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 12 (in the note), believed that only out of politeness towards Hayy was his court also included in the title of “the great court”; Aptowitz, *JQR*, NS 4 (1913/4), 35, believed the opposite, to wit, that the politeness was towards Sherira after his retirement, while Mann (above, in this note), 469, argued to the contrary, that this was a regular arrangement which began when Hayy became chief judge, and that at the same time Hayy was staying in Pumbedita, while Sherira was staying in Baghdad, i.e., that we must, according to him, assume that the yeshiva moved to Baghdad

(228) Above we have seen some of the dates pertaining to HAYY GAON. According to Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, he lived ninety-nine years, and we know the date of his death, according to the addendum of Sherira Gaon's *Letter* (the above-mentioned Damascus manuscript) it was Sel. 1349, in Nisan; Abraham Ibn Da'ūd is more precise: "on the eve of the last festival day of Passover", i.e., 29 March 1038. Thus if Abraham Ibn Da'ūd is correct, Hayy was born in 939, i.e., when his father Sherira was thirty-three, and he was gaon from 1004, i.e., he served in the gaonate for thirty-four years. Thus his dates are: born in 939, appointed chief judge of the yeshiva in 985, became gaon in 1004, and died in 1038.

Mann shows that it is implied in a letter of Samuel b. Hophni, that Hayy's appointment as chief judge raised a storm in Pumbedita. It was the time of a schism, for Samuel b. Hophni writes in 937 about the sadness and pain, and about "one of the scholars who calls himself a leader"; and he seeks separate donations (from the Babylonian community of Fustat) for himself and his party. It appears that this schism was maintained from the time that Sherira became gaon, in 968. However, at a later time, as we have seen (above, sec. 215), the rival sides were reconciled, a reconciliation that was strengthened with the marriage of Samuel b. Hophni's daughter and Hayy b. Sherira.

The Ramla man, writing to Mevorakh b. Saadia, *nagid* of Egypt, at about 1095, after a lengthy stay in Iraq, mentions Hayy Gaon's grave *ḥi'l-anbār ḥi'l-tūr*, meaning: on the mountain near Pumbedita.

Hayy Gaon's Arabic nickname (*kunya*) was Abū'l-Bishr; Samuel b. Moses Ibn Jāmi^c, writing in about 1030 from Fustat, apparently, to his partner (perhaps to Qābis), notes that he searched for the order *nāshīm*, but did not manage to acquire it, and so wrote a number of times to "Abū Bishr Hayy" entreating him to have it copied for him; Hayy promised that it would be done, but did not keep his word.

In my collection there are seven letters and fragments of letters by Hayy Gaon, in addition to the letters he wrote together with his father Sherira, that I have mentioned above. On 11 August 1006, he wrote a letter to Qayrawān, apparently to Jacob b. Nissim, a copy of which has been preserved. On 9 February 1007, he wrote to the two brothers, Jacob and Tanhūm, sons of Jacob, in Fās, the letter apparently being in the handwriting of the gaon; therein mentioned is serious damage to the houses of the gaon and the yeshiva, and the death of Jacob b. Nissim, and the gaon asks the brothers' advice, as to whom to appoint in his place. Also apparently in his handwriting is a letter he wrote on 7 February 1018, to Elḥanan b. Shemariah in Fustat, about collecting a debt in Fustat. A fragment of another letter to Elḥanan, written about 1025, of which we have a copy, deals with the problem of a proselyte, probably someone who was originally a Christian. In April 1037 the gaon wrote in his handwriting, to Nehemiah *rōsh ha-pereq* b. Abraham, in Fustat, about a release from a vow undertaken by Nehemiah. In December of that year he wrote to the latter's brother, Sahlān b. Abraham, the handwriting being that of the yeshiva scribe, regarding a controversy in the Fustat Babylonian

(above, sec. 205) only in part, something which does not seem likely. Letters of Sherira Gaon, see 19–35. The copy of the act of the court: 29.

community. Also in the yeshiva scribe's handwriting is a letter about the appointment of an unidentified *rōsh kallā*, whose time is not known. We also have a fragment of a deed drawn up in the court of Hayy Gaon. Also found is a letter to Hayy Gaon written by the Fustat Babylonian community about 1025, with a request that he write a letter of curses against someone who was stealing letters meant for the community.²²⁸

(229) Elsewhere I have already written about the relations between Hayy Gaon and the Palestinian yeshiva, about which we know mainly from the time of Solomon b. Judah, the Palestinian gaon, who did not refrain from sending his son Yaḥyā to study Torah with Hayy Gaon, even though he was in conflict with Hayy over the matter of income from ritual slaughter in the diaspora communities. It appears that Hayy Gaon was involved at the beginning of the controversy between Solomon b. Judah and his competitor, Nathan b. Abraham, while his dissension was directed against the priestly family, descendants of Joseph ha-Kohen b. Menaḥem, with whom Solomon b. Judah had in-law ties. Somewhat enigmatic is a letter that I have already mentioned, that Sherira and Hayy wrote together, on 18 July 989, of which a fragment has been preserved with a request that the letter be read in public: "we demand: please, head of the yeshiva, may you live forever, that you order that the letter be read in public just as it was done with letters of our forefathers, many times. We have explained in our letter, that it be read with permission of the head of the yeshiva, may the Merciful guard him" (lest they think that the letter was sent behind the back of the Palestinian gaon); it appears that this letter was sent (according to the time it was written) to the then Palestinian gaon, Samuel ha-Kohen b. Joseph.

As we have seen, Hayy Gaon maintained ties with the diasporas, evidence of which is his letter to Fustat (to Nehemiah and Sahlān, the sons of Abraham), his letters to Qayrawān and Fās, and the stay with him of Maṣliḥ b. Eliah, the Sicilian judge. He had good ties with the Tustaris, as shown by his letter to Sahlān b. Abraham (December 1037) that I have mentioned here. The Tustaris (*al-dasātira*) even dealt with and helped to send the gaon's letters to the Maghrib, as attested by the sons of Berekhiah

²²⁸ See the Damascus manuscript, Neubauer, *Med. J. Chron.*, I, 189, also in Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 103; Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 43f. In the Geniza fragment TS 6 K 2, f.2r, line 3 one can still read: "our Lord Hayy Gaon passed away in Elul of the year....", which is certainly a copyist's error, who wrote Hayy instead of some other name, because in the same line one can also read: "and the soul of our Lord Hayy Gaon rested on...."; more trustworthy, therefore, is the text of the Damascus manuscript. See also on the dates: Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.*, 111, which must be corrected. Samuel b. Hophni: 47, lines 10ff. See Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 178. The grave: 86, a, line 9. Benjamin of Tudela (Adler, 46) writes that his grave was in Sura (as he also wrote regarding Sherira Gaon; Sherira's grave is not mentioned by the Ramla man; as to Hayy Gaon's grave the Ramla man is more trustworthy than Benjamin of Tudela). The letter of Ibn Jāmi': 141, b, lines 3-8; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/1), 434, n. 1. Harkavy, *Zikhrōn r. Shemū'el*, 171, concluded from the verse of the Spanish *nagid*'s eulogy over the death of Hayy Gaon, that his name was pronounced: Hayyā; cf. Ḥabīb b. Hāyā (!), the grandfather of the scholar Sahl b. Bishr (above, sec. 191). See Morag, *Tarbiz*, 31 (1961/2), 188, who sought to prove that Hayy was nothing other than Hayyim, or Hay. His letters: see 37-42, 61, (the latter also contains the deed fragment). The letter of the 'Babylonian' community: 43. See also the discussions around the letters, according to the references I cited in their preambles; cf. especially Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 77ff.

in their letter to Joseph b. Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal; the sons of Berekhiah are impressed with the beauty of the gaon's letter. Samuel the *nagid* is impressed with Hayy Gaon, as shown by his verses: "let the Talmud attest to what I say.... and Rav Hayy, the greatest of all that are mine", etc. Joseph b. Labrāṭ al-Fāṣī, in his letter to Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, mentions the "head of the yeshiva", undoubtedly in connection with a controversy in Qayrawān, meaning Hayy Gaon. Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī, writing to Ephraim b. Shemariah in Fustat, tells of the excitement generated in Fustat when he purchased quires that had belonged to Elḥanan b. Shemariah that included "two queries from the yeshiva.... that were written in the Great Court before Hayy, head of the yeshiva, son of Sherira head of the yeshiva", and he copies the responsum (but the copy was lost).

A faithful ally of Hayy Gaon's in the Maghrib was the *nagid* of Qayrawān, Abraham b. ʿAṭā. Under his aegis a struggle was taking place in Qayrawān, apparently around the question of the distribution of funds to the yeshivot, and the *nagid* was struggling for fifty percent of the funds to be sent to Hayy Gaon. This is what we learn from a letter from Qayrawān to Jacob b. ʿAwkal, written about 1010. Letters are mentioned there, of "our Lord the head of the yeshiva" that gave the writer great pleasure, because they contained praise and thanks for Ibn ʿAwkal. The *nagid* donated a great sum, thirty dinars, on condition that half the money be sent to "our Lord Hayy". Therein is a passage: "all these (because of the condition of the manuscript it is not clear who is meant) will let you know who is on the side of our Lord Hayy in Qayrawān"; further down, the writer asked Ibn ʿAwkal that he too write to Hayy in this spirit.²²⁹

(230) Abraham Ibn Daʿūd in the *Book of Tradition* writes about "rascals in Israel" who denounced Sherira and Hayy, "and the king of the Ishmaelites grabbed them and despoiled them of all their possessions and left them with nothing to live on"; further: "and Rav Sherira Gaon depended on one hand"; (*niṭlā*, which may be "was hanged", but also 'depended', i.e., was in distress) when he was "about one-hundred years

²²⁹ Yahyā b. Solomon b. Judah, see Gil, *Palest.*, II, 93, no. 53, on the margin, lines 13ff.; this letter was written ca. 1015, before Solomon b. Judah became gaon; Solomon b. Judah mentions that he received a letter from his son, together with a letter from Hayy Gaon. It is possible that it was Hayy Gaon who wrote a letter to Solomon b. Judah ca. 1026, near the time that the latter was appointed gaon of Palestine, which was a courtesy letter, with the passage, "God will show you the face of our Master Yahyā your *ḥamūd* ('delight' = son) while in life and in peace soon", see more on this: Gil, *ibid.*, 298, no. 174. On the issue of the relations between Hayy Gaon and Solomon b. Judah, *idem*, *Hist.*, 527ff. and *Te'uda* 7 (1990/1), 293, 299; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 91f.; Ben-Sasson, *Zion*, 51 (1985), 384, 397ff. The letter to the gaon Samuel ha-Kohen: 27. In 41, b, lines 3-4, Hayy Gaon asks Sahlān b. Abraham (December 1037) after the gaon received a letter from Solomon b. Judah, that he inform him of the "condition and status" of the aforementioned. Its meaning cannot be that Hayy Gaon did not know Solomon b. Judah; true, literally: that he inform him of his title and status, but he meant: how was he? (in light of the attempts to undermine him that began with Nathan b. Abraham's return to Palestine; it appears that Hayy Gaon supported Nathan). The Tustaris conveyed the gaon's letters: 150, lines 13ff.; Hayy Gaon is often mentioned, relatively speaking, in the merchants' letters in my collection, see its index in vol. IV of *Be-malkhūt*. See the *dirwān* of Samuel *ha-nāgīd* (Yarden edition), 91 (no. 27), line 42ff., Joseph b. Labrāṭ: 108. Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn: 125, lines 15ff. Abraham b. ʿAṭā: 198, cf. Goitein, *Zion*, 27, (1962), 159ff., who notes, among other things, that one of the reasons for Abraham b. ʿAṭā's strong support for Hayy Gaon was the fact that it was he who had granted him the title of *nagid*.

old; but he was not removed from the gaonate". Samuel the *nagid*, in his lament for Hayy Gaon, bemoaned, among other things, the undefined evildoers who "wickedly persecuted and hunted him and set a trap to ensnare him and laid in wait for him as for an animal, and in their treachery they were as Sanballat and Tobiah" (Nehemiah 2:10).

To this information regarding the harsh persecution suffered by Sherira and Hayy, one should add what the father and son wrote at about 1005: "for by His mercy, our Creator made that our lives be unto us for a prey" (Jer. 21:9). In the same letter: "in this month of Elul, the days of the *kallā*, we were dropped far away with one student and we would sit by the side and prosodize the treatise current at the *kallā*, crying and moaning". Hints can be affixed from some of Hayy Gaon's letters written after the death of his father, Sherira Gaon. On 7 February 1007 he writes to the brothers Abraham and Tanhūm, the sons of Jacob in Fās, and mentions in his letter the destruction of the houses where he and his family lived, and those who were with them, meaning, apparently, the people of the yeshiva. He needs money to reconstruct the houses and tries to mobilize the funds, and he wants to know how much money had been gathered to be sent to the yeshiva, some of which was in Fustat, with Ibn 'Awkal, and some of which had been sent by the people of Qayrawān via the now deceased Jacob b. Nissim. Also in the letter of Joseph and Nissim, sons of Berekhiah, to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, apparently written some years afterwards, they hint at "the impasse besetting Hayy Gaon, may the Merciful protect him"—things they learned about from the letter of Nissim their cousin, that troubled and saddened them.

The information in Ibn Da'ūd, that Sherira Gaon "was hanged (*nitlā*) on one hand" was somewhat of a mystery for scholars. Some assumed that it should be taken literally, and found parallels in Christian martyrology. As against this, it was claimed that—according to what Ibn Da'ūd further states—Sherira was not removed from his post of gaon, which contradicts this story, that should be considered an invention; or, it was considered an erroneous translation of some Arab idiom. However, Fleischer has shown, based on *piyyūt*, that the meaning is: he was impoverished, lived in poverty; this is also in accordance with the additional information which I quote on the sufferings of Sherira and Hayy.

In all events, the long lives of the father and the son, each living about one-hundred years, prove that those seventy years that they served as geonim, despite the hardship and persecution they occasionally suffered, were a period of stability, prolific creativity, and strong and distinguished leadership for most of the Jewish diaspora communities.²³⁰

²³⁰ See Ibn Da'ūd, *Book of Trad.*, 344. Samuel *ha-nagid*, the *dīwān* (Yarden edition), 231ff. The letter of Sherira and Hayy: 30, part i, lines 12f., part xii, lines 9ff. See also the note: to part xii, line 11, regarding the word *ū-medadmīm*. Cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 92, n. 33. The letter to Fās: 38, b, lines 3ff.; the sons of Berekhiah: 145, lines 3ff.; see Hayy's complaints about the hard times afflicting him, in his letter to Sahlān b. Abraham (December 1037): 41. See Fleischer, *Zion*, 41 (1977), 165ff. Previously, that peculiar expression was much discussed; a Christian parallel was cited: what happened to the Persian Anastasius: *una manu per tres horas suspensus* (he was hung by one hand for three hours) and then decapitated. This martyr had lived in Palestine, and these events should have happened during the Persian conquest; see Ekkehard, who cites Beda, in *MGH* (SS) VI, 153; Sigebert (of Belgian Gembloux) *ibid.*, 322; both are cited by Cassel, *Wiss. Ber.* (Erfurt), 1 (1853),

(231) The father and son worked together for about two generations, and cooperated in the area of thought and writing. A number of their treatises in the realm of *halākhā*, especially the responsa, are the result of such cooperation and there are in them definite signs of mutual influence.

In ca. 970, shortly after he became gaon, Sherira Gaon complains bitterly about the decline in Pumbedita's status. What caused these complaints was perhaps the rise of the status of the Palestinian yeshiva after the Fatimid conquest of Egypt and the lands north of it. In a letter he wrote to the Maghrib, Sherira lamented the break in the connection with Pumbedita—a process that began in the earlier generation. According to him: “from the time your forefathers began to be silent, the yeshiva started suffering from want and the want grows greater”, and then, with an addition of warnings about the curses from heaven that will be incurred by the abandonment of the yeshiva: “how, if the head has been despoiled can the body remain intact”. Pumbedita was still the center of *halākhā* and adjudication: “even though other places have grown greater in *halākhā*, the four ells of the *halākhā* are still here”, and he compares his yeshiva to the *sanhedrīn*, and the gaon (i.e., he, himself) “is in lieu of our Master Moses”. From this sense of decline, a constant effort was made to raise Pumbedita's status and cultivate the ties with the Diaspora Jewish communities.

Here are some examples of that cooperation and mutual dependence between the father and the son. In a reaction regarding the *heqdēsh* (pious foundations), for example: “thus our Lord Hayy Gaon of blessed memory ruled, and we found a responsum of our Lord Sherira Gaon of blessed memory, regarding a person who dedicated all of his property to the poor and did not stipulate that ‘from [now and] after my death’, and he died.... and the responsum interpreted by our Lord Sherira Gaon of blessed memory, which was signed and adjudicated by our Lord Hayy of blessed memory after him, in the presence of all the scholars of the yeshiva” etc. Such was also the interpretation of the expression *gōvē de-diqnā* (BT, *mo'ed qāṭān* 24a) that they are the margins of the beard (*Niddā* 23b) that the *ʿArūkh* cites in the name of Sherira Gaon, while in a fragment of responsa in a Geniza quire this explanation is ascribed to Hayy Gaon: “our Master Hayy Gaon says the *gōvidiqnā* is the hair atop the jaws.... among the Ishmaelites one may still see that they pull the edge of the cap over the mouth and above their nose....”. We also find in a list of books: “a volume of *Neziqīn*, *yerushalmī*, a commentary on three chapters of (*Bāvā*) *Batrā*, by our Masters Sherira and Hayy”, which apparently means the *Neziqīn* text in the Palestinian Talmud, followed by the commentary by the two of them to three chapters of *Bāvā Batrā*. Their commentary to the three chapters of the *Bāvā Batrā* is also known from Geniza fragments collected by Mann. Also to be mentioned is Abramson, who noted a number of responsa and quires of responsa that were ascribed to both Sherira and

161; see *idem* in Ersch and Gruber, *Encycl.*, XXVII, 192 n. 27, concluding that the information in the *Book of Trad.* is trustworthy. Against it, see Lebrecht, in the Asher edition of Benjamin of Tudela, 333 in the note, who insists that there is no mention of any similar event; see: A. Ovadia, *Sinai*, 2 (1937/8), 555, who has a survey of the various proposals concerning that passage about Sherira Gaon; see the proposal of G. Cohen, Ibn Da'ūd's editor, in the *Book of Trad.*, English part, 132 (concerning line 199), that it was a translation of an Arabic idiom. See Fleischer, *Zion*, 41 (1977), 165ff.

Hayy. It appears that their cooperation and joint studies took place between 985 and 1004, i.e., from the time Hayy became chief judge of the yeshiva until he became gaon, when his father was still living, but appears to have been enfeebled. This can be learned from a quire of responsa where it is mentioned: "the *kallā* of Elul in the year (Sel.) 1308 (AD 997), when we studied in the yeshiva *mī she-hāyā nāsūy* ('he who was married to two women'; Mishnā, *Yevāmōt*, 4:11, and BT, *Yevāmōt*, 43b)"; also stated there is: "this is what I learned there, I, the *av* (chief judge, i.e., Hayy) in this matter", etc.; Hayy was then still chief judge, seven years before becoming gaon.²³¹

(232) The essence of the literary heritage left by Sherira Gaon is the many responsa to queries sent to him from throughout the diasporas. However, he also wrote treatises, especially on tractates of the Talmud: *Berākhōt*, *Yōmā*, *Giṭṭān*, *Ketubbōt*, and *Bāvā Batrā*. His commentary on *Bāvā Batrā*, apparently his first treatise, written in Sel. 1284, i.e., 973, is mainly (as are his other commentaries) explanations of words. Rabbēnū Ḥananel used it often. Some fragments were published by Lewin, Assaf, and Mann. A fragment of Sherira Gaon's commentary to the tractate *Giṭṭān*, was published by Epstein; it is styled in the form of a responsum on *mī she-aḥāzō qōrdīqōs* ("he who was seized by a heart disease; καρδιακός"), Mishnā, *Giṭṭān*, 7:11; BT *Giṭṭān*, 67b ff; it contains mainly explanations of the words.

Most of Sherira's commentaries are explanations of words and terms of the Talmud; his commentaries were copied by others and quotations from his commentaries on words are found in the Mishnā commentary ascribed to Nathan Av (chief judge, son of Abraham), and Jonah Ibn Janah's *Book of Roots*. Thus, for example, is his explanation of the name Abayē: "There is a reason for his being called Abayē, as was written by our Lord Sherira, of blessed memory, who had thus received from his forefathers: he was the son of Raba bar Naḥmānī's sister and his student, and since his name was like that of his father, he did not always call him Naḥmānī, as was his father's name, but would call him Abayē, which means my father in Aramaic; therefore he was called Abayē".

Sherira's most famous writing is the *Letter*, written in 987, when he was eighty-one, a responsum to the query of Jacob b. Nissim, the leader of the Qayrawān community. This letter is one of the main historical sources of our knowledge of the period of the Mishnā and the Talmud and the geonic period. Since its first publication in the *Sefer yūḥasīn*, it has been printed a number of times, and published in a scientific edition with "variant versions from all the manuscripts and Geniza fragments in the world", by B. M. Lewin. He organized his edition according to two versions, and called one

²³¹ Sherira, ca. 970: 23; the matter of the *ʿArūkh*: Abramson, *Leṣonenu*, 36 (1971/2), 147; the Geniza quire: BL Or 5563D, 37r. Commentary to *Neziqin*: Lewin, *Rav Sherira Gaon*, 26, and see *ibid.* more examples of treatises written by the two of them together. See the list of books in Adler and Brody, *JQR*, 13 (1900/1), 54 (line 66); see Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 195-207, and see *ibid.*, 204, the mention of Ḥananiah Gaon, and *ibid.*, 205, the mention of Samuel *aluf*, father of the gaon's grandfather, and the mention of the geonim (Isaac) Semah b. Paltoi, Naḥshōn, and Isaac Šādōq. Mann, *Texts*, I, 568-572; cf. Abramson, *ʿInyanōt*, 114ff. Also see examples of responsa written together by Sherira and Hayy, or ascribed either to the one or the other, *ibid.*, 138ff.; "whoever was married to two women and died", see BT, *Yevāmōt*, 43bff., and see on this: Groner, *Alei sefer*, 8 (1979/80), 5ff.

of them the 'Spanish' version and the other the 'French' version. Fragments of the *Letter* were found in the Geniza, and it should be noted that they are usually identical to what he calls the French version—which Lewin himself notes in his introduction. Nevertheless, Lewin was not acquainted with all of the Geniza fragments, for the new series (NS) and the additional series (AS) in Cambridge were not yet available to scholars.

The information Sherira presents in his *Letter* was extracted from writings preserved at the yeshiva of Pumbedita and contained lists dating from the talmudic period. Sherira copied them meticulously and his dates often include the day and the month. Especially clear was to him the history of geonim who flourished in Pumbedita, even when one-hundred-eighty years separated between him and them: "we have clear knowledge of much of what happened in the days of our Lord and Master Palṭoi and of our Lord and Master Aḥī (=Aḥā ha-Kohen) and our Lord and Master Mattathias, all geonim, of blessed memory, as I have seen it, and I knew the place and seat of each of them, and what he taught and what was said in his yeshiva.... (such as) what happened during the years of our Lord and master Ikhōmai b. R. Abraham (such is the correct reading; 810-814), of blessed memory", etc.

Many of Sherira's responsa have been preserved. It should be borne in mind that during his lifetime there was a considerable migration from the Maghrib to Egypt and many of his responsa reached Egypt, either because Egypt was a transit point for the passage of letters between the Maghrib and Babylonia, or because some of the immigrants had copies of the gaon's responsa. In this way the responsa were distributed in the Jewish diasporas. Some of them were included in early collections of responsa and published, whereas some of them were preserved in the Geniza. Many of his responsa may be found in Lewin's *Oṣar ha-geōnīm*, by the index; while some of them were published elsewhere.²³²

²³² See the list of commentaries in Lewin, *Rav Sherira G.*, 26 n. 2 and his sources *ibid.* On the commentary to *Bāvā Batrā* see Epstein, *REJ*, 64 (1912), 210ff., and *ibid.*, 211 n. 2, his disagreements with Lewin and Poznanski; also, p. 214, where he expresses the view that perhaps all of the quotations from the tractates *Berākhot*, *Shabbāt* and *Ḥagigā*, ascribed to Hayy, are actually Sherira's, thereby refraining from assuming that the two of them wrote commentaries to the same tractate, and we can also understand the contradictions between those commentaries and Hayy's responsa. See fragments from the commentary to *Bāvā Batrā* 36b-37a, 44a-b, in Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/4), 17ff., 31ff.; to *Bāvā Batrā* 22-27, in Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 195-207 and the passage, p. 198: "this is what we were asked in the yeshiva, in the *kallā* of Adar (Sel.) 1284" (ca. February 973); and p. 204 where the gaon cites a commentary that was approved at the *siyūmā* (apparently: discussion) of the gaon [Isaac] Ṣemaḥ b. Palṭoi, according to the statements of "the gaon, father of the gaon my father", i.e. Sherira's grandfather, Judah b. Samuel; and p. 206, where he noted the agreement between his father's grandfather, Samuel *alūf* and the gaon of Sura, Naḥshōn b. [Isaac] Ṣādōq on the issue discussed, and see there the editor's preamble and his comments, the matter of the citation from this commentary in Isaac b. Abbā Marī's *Sefer ha-īṭṭūr*, and the comparison with the commentary of Rabbēnū Hananel; also see the fragment of the commentary to *Bāvā Batrā*, in Mann, *Texts*, I, 568-572, where, on p. 569, the gaon mentions "Rav Joseph Gaon, son of our Lord and Master and our cousin". It appears that the son, Hayy, also participated in this tract. Cf. Abramson, *Sinai*, 23 (1947/8), 58. See Hurvitz, *Hadarom*, 46 (1977/8) 123ff.; 49 (1979/80), 67ff., his citations and notes. See Epstein, *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/4), 1-12. Explanations of words, citations, see Assaf, *Resp.* (1942), 172ff. The nickname Abayē, from Nissim b. Jacob's *al-Faraj ba'd al-shidda*, see DK 409, which was already shown by Weiss, *Dōr d. we-d.*, III, 174, and the note, according to "R. Nissim's

(233) Sherira's rationalist and matter of fact method was faithfully inherited by his son Hayy. Moreover, Hayy Gaon gave explicit expression to the view that lay at the basis of this method in the *halākhā*. Thus, for example, his responsum regarding the gold alchemists who sought to produce gold: "...you seek luxuries and we cannot provide an answer. For how can a man make gold of broken clumps of earth; this is what Aristotle and the philosophers write, since all of them are sorcerers, and they are all unanimous on all this....". He also attacks the belief in miracles, in his responsum to the Qayrawānites Joseph b. Berekhiah and Jacob (as it should be) b. Nissim: "all the nonsense that you wrote to us before, that there are some names which can perform great acts, which is impossible for a person to do so but in a miraculous way; and we responded that these and the like are absurdities. There are things that are not conceivable at all, such as when you said that someone incants a name and raises himself above the robbers.... to sum up: 'the simple believeth every word'" (Prov. 14:15). Hayy Gaon ascribes the superstitions, and even a leaning to star and zodiac worship, to the people of Sura. In responding to what the queriers write, that people of Spain have a tradition that "our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai Gaon, may the memory of the righteous be blessed, came to them from Babylonia in a miraculous flight, taught Torah and returned home", Hayy Gaon says: "It may have been a deceiver who said, I am Naṭrūnai", adding that had something of the like occurred they would have known about it in the yeshiva. He also mentions the Sura gaon, Moses ha-Kohen (b. Jacob, ca. 820-830), about whom it was said that "he was a person versed in amulets, incantations, etc"., but the matter was investigated and it was discovered "by our ancestors.... that these claims were false". Further down: "in the Sura yeshiva these things proliferated because they were near

Sefer ha-ma'asiyōt", and see the Arabic source also in Abramson, *Rav Nissim*, 475, from other manuscripts, and see 476, notes 25, 26. See Lewin's preface to Sherira's *Letter*, where on p. xlv there is the matter of the similarity between the 'French' version and the versions of the Geniza. More Geniza fragments are in Cambridge; see, for example, TS AS 146.149 – a fragment parallel to the Lewin edition, 118. Also in the Adler collection I found an important fragment, ENA 1490, f. 7v, parallel to page 110 in the Lewin edition, in the handwriting of the Maghribi Abraham b. David b. Sughmār, who copied the issue of the controversies between Abraham b. Sherira and Joseph b. Ḥiyyā (ca. 825) and Menahem b. Joseph and Mattathias b. Ravrevaī (ca. 858). The copy is from the summer of 1039, i.e., about 52 years after the *Letter* was written; cf. Gil, *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/1), 302. See Sherira's comments on his own knowledge regarding the history of his forerunners: Appendix iv to the *Letter*, from a Parma manuscript, and see note 3, references to parallel versions. The responsa, see for example, Ginzberg, *Geon.* II, 26ff. (matters of *kashrūt*), 57ff. (list of queries), 61ff. (*idem*), 67ff., 206 (matters of purity); see *ibid.*, 123-128 and the addition published by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/4), 36ff. See six responsa from the Sassoon Collection published by Assaf, in the same volume of *Ginzē q.*, 108ff. See Sherira's responsa regarding "whoever took an oath in a dream", published by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 4 (1929/30), 39. Also see the responsum regarding collecting from movable goods, and a citation from it in Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/1), 459, edited in full by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 1 (1921/2), 69ff., where there is mention of a responsum on this matter by Sherira's father, Ḥananiah Gaon (the versions are from MS Bodl 2643, no. 26). See also "a quire sent to Fustat, with queries of our Lord and Master Elhanan of blessed memory, and the responsum of our Lord and Master Sherira of blessed memory", after which there was supposed to be a *sharḥ*, i.e., the details of the contents of the quire; which is the text of a Berlin manuscript, edited by Assaf, *Miss. ha-g.*, 224, reprinted also in *Ōṣar ha-g. to Bāwā Qammā*, 46 (no. 134).

the city of Babylon and the house of Nebuchadnezzar and we are far from there". He goes on: "we feel pity for you for having such beliefs".

Here belongs also what Nahmanides, in his letter to the rabbis of France, ascribes to Hayy Gaon—statements that agree to studying Mishnā and Talmud together with 'external' sciences ('those things and the paths of philosophy'), but not 'external' sciences alone: "you will not find the fear of sin and humility and sacredness except among those who study Mishnā and Talmud together with sciences, not sciences alone"; but what is put in an affirmative way includes a negation: he did not negate the study of sciences. True, besides the version ascribed to Nahmanides there is another one, according to which he wrote the above to Samuel, the Spanish *nagid*, where there are statements such as: "I instruct our Lord the *nagid*, may he live forever, not to deal with the science of logic which is a harsh blow and leads to transgression and was forbidden by our scholars of blessed memory"; he also writes about the troubles and controversies and profligacy that have entered the hearts of many people that dealt with it in Baghdad in the days of ʿAḏud al-dawla (the Būyid ruler, 977-983).... to such an extent that they left the fold"; in this version the matter of studying Torah and sciences together is totally omitted. It seems to me that the 'moderate' version is the reliable one, as Rapoport believed, joined by Weiss, in an article he published in 1887, that presents more facts about Hayy Gaon's knowledge of sciences, and also Samuel the Spanish *nagid*'s lament over Hayy, where, among other things, he says: "who kept, while alive, every gracious science". This was also the understanding of the author of *Sefer ha-ʿittim*, in all events when the object was teaching children: "It was said in the name of our Master Hayy, that it is permissible to teach children in the synagogue, alongside the study of Torah, Arabic script and arithmetic, but it is an error do so without Torah", obviously an echo of the 'moderate' version of the gaon's responsum.²³³

²³³ Gold: *Resp. Shaʿarē Tesh.*, no. 5. The responsum to the people of Qayrawān: from *Taʿam zeqenim*, in Harkavy, *Meʿassef nidd.*, I, 42, n.19; see more of Harkavy's comments *ibid.* in the continuation. A different and expanded version is in *ʿOṣar ha-g.* to *Ḥagīgā*, 16ff. Regarding the Naṭrūnai legend (which came from the story of the exilarch Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai); I have already dealt with it (above, sec. 78). See also: Gil, *Hist.*, 503ff. The same attitude towards the geonim of Sura also belongs to what is said in a geonic responsum cited by Ibn Ḥayyāth in *Shaʿarē s.*, 36: "... we have heard that in the Maḥsiya yeshiva there were those who spoke about 'the one who is blowing the *shofar* (against) a demon....' We do not know what sounds are blown for demons or why they should be blown" (the intention is the Babylonian Talmūd, *Rōsh ha-shānā*, 28a, 33b where it says: *ha-toqēʿa le-shūr*, he who sounds [the horn] as a song, see *Diqduqē sōf.*, and the version: *la-shid* [for a demon] MS London and MS Oxford of the Talmud, cf. Harkavy, *Zikhrōn shemuʿel b. ḥōfnī*, 11f. (in n. 13), and *ibid.* 13f. (n. 19), more proof of the gaon's rationalist approach. See the text of Nahmanides' letter in Delmedigo (Yāshār of Candia), *Taʿalimōt ḥokhmā*, 49. It appears that the view to blend Torah with secular science also suited the views of Nahmanides himself. Cf. Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, I, 178 (no. 15). See the other version, of negating secular science, in *ʿOṣar ha-g.* to *Ḥagīgā*, 65f., from a manuscript of Isaac b. Samuel's ("of Acre"; 1291-1336) *Meʿirat ʿeynayim* and other manuscripts. See in Busse, *Chalif*, 520f., on the flourishing of philosophy in tenth century Baghdad. See Geiger, *JZWL*, 1 (1861), 211, who rejects the view of Rapoport, who sought to see in Hayy an adherent of philosophy; he also argued against the view of his contemporary, Grätz (*MGWJ*, 11:37, 1862), who believed that the entire letter was a fabrication written in the circle of the zealous opponents of Maimonides in Southern France, and that the passage supporting secular science was inserted by Delmedigo. Geiger argued that Hayy Gaon's letter in its entirety was genuine, and learned

(234) Hayy Gaon also deals with the problem of the *ajal*, i.e., whether it is God who determines when a person will die. In his commentary on Isaiah 38:5 (God's words to the prophet, to say to Hezekiah: "I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years"), Judah Ibn Bil'am discusses Hayy Gaon's pertinent responsum, the gist being, that God undoubtedly knows when a person will die. But if killed by an enemy, was this the time according to God's decision? We cannot know; it is only God who knows. Yet he may have anyway died then in accordance to what had been allotted to him by God. Nevertheless, he notes that *ajal* is not a Jewish term; for the Arabs it means an absolutely determined time; the Bible, on the other hand, has examples of the time of death being deferred, for example: "the number of thy days I will fulfil" (Ex. 23:26), meaning that you will die in old age.

Early cabalistic circles ascribed to Hayy Gaon responsa in the realm of *qabbālā*. As Harkavy has already shown, these were nothing but forgeries, and Gershom Scholem also wrote about the cabalistic ideas wrongly ascribed to Hayy Gaon.²³⁴

from MS Munich of Nahmanides' letter, where the 'moderate' passage about secular science is omitted, that indeed, only that passage was a forgery inserted by Delmedigo, by which he expressed his own view. See the 'extreme' version also in Perles, *MGWJ*, 9, (1860), 194, who published Nahmanides' letter (*ibid.* 184ff.) from MS Saravai no. xxxviii at the library of the rabbinical seminary in Breslau. See Samuel *ha-nāḡid*'s dirge in the *diwān* (Yarden edition), 231ff.; and the citation: *ibid.*, 235. Cf Weiss, *Ha'āsif*, 3 (1886/7), 151. See Judah of Barcelona, *Sefer ha-ittim*, 256. Also interesting is what is said further down "as to teaching children of gentiles, whenever you can refuse, do so; but if you are afraid of resentment, do not refuse, for the sake of peace". Cf Assaf, *Meqōrōt le-toled. ha-ḥ.* 5f., with the version from *Sefer ha-ittim* (with slight corrections, according to a manuscript); Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 177.

²³⁴ See the Isaiah commentary of Judah Ibn Bil'am (edited by Derenbourg), *REJ*, 22 (1891), 202-207; also see the Hebrew translation of a partial version of the responsum, whose Arabic source was found in the Geniza, in Wertheimer, *Qehill. shel.*, 2-7, which is part of the same responsum of Hayy Gaon, which it says here was sent to the Qābis community. He also published the Arabic source, *ibid.*, 74ff. Also see the comments of Bacher, *ZAW*, 13 (1893), 138 and the article by Kaufmann, *ZDMG*, 49:73, 1895, who quotes Arabic sources about the *ajal* in Islam as background material to what is the gaon's responsum. Cf. Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 44 (1900), 142f.; also see Goldziher, *ZDMG*, 32 (1878), 354 n. 6, who cites an Istanbul MS, Refaia 211, fol. 22a, that the Angel asks God to determine the fetus' fate—something that happens 40-45 days before it was formed—whether it shall be rich or poor, etc., and also to determine its *ajal*; this is very similar to what is in the Babylonian Talmud, *Niddā*, 16b: "that angel in charge of conception, Layla (night) is its name, takes a drop of semen and presents it to the Holy Blessed One and says before Him, Master of the Universe, what will be out of this drop, a person strong or weak, smart or stupid, rich or poor. Whether wicked or righteous he does not ask... all is in the hands of Heaven, except for fear of Heaven". There is nothing in the Talmud which corresponds to the *ajal*. See on the *ajal* also: Weil, in *Assaf Jub. Vol.*, 261ff., who published the complete version of the geonic responsum, used the versions of Wertheimer and of Derenbourg, and discussed the background of the relevant medieval Islamic sources. Also see Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma*, 102, 134, 140, 147, who quotes a *khārījī* (*ibādī*) text: whoever does not participate in the *jihād* will not have his *ajal* postponed; death by violence does not depend on the *ajal*; and more. Regarding the responsa in matters of *qabbālā*, see Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, at its end, 13 (note 19); *Had. gam yesh.* (reprint), 115f.; see also *idem*, in his introduction to his *Resp.*, xviff.; Scholem, *Tarbiz*, 2 (1930/1), 419-425; *idem*, *Ursprung*, 96, regarding the attitude of the gaon towards miracles; 275 n. 207, on texts wrongly ascribed to Hayy Gaon in Meir b. Simeon of Narbonne, but are not his; and other comments wrongly ascribed to him, in matters of *qabbālā*, *ibid.*, 281, 285; see also: Vajda, *Recherches*, 137.

(235) Many of Hayy Gaon's responsa have been preserved, more than of any other of the Babylonian geonim. Hameiri writes of him that "he wrote few books, among them the book of *dīnīm* (laws) and the book of oaths and the book of commerce, but wrote many responsa to queries and most of his treatises and responsa are reliable". His responsa amazed early adjudicators, as we learn from what an anonymous person, apparently his contemporary, wrote: "he sees with the bottom of one eye what the others do not see with both their eyes". The same holds for modern historians, such as Rapoport, who cites his responsum regarding the blowing of the shofar, where the gaon fiercely attacked the annoying queries about insignificant differences in the cultic order, and explained that when they said: "the *halākhā* was given to Moses at Sinai", they meant what the majority of the scholars said, "go and see what people say"; and there Rapoport expresses his amazement: "how sweet was his soul to speak of everything on his mind that was faithful to God and he was not afraid of anyone".

As stated, the number of Hayy Gaon's responsa (those preserved) is very great. Zvi Groner, in his study, compiled a list of the gaon's writings, and if we included in the list of responsa also those regarding the meaning of words etc. (listed by him separately), there is certainly a corpus of about eight-hundred responsa. Groner also studied the matter of the quires of Hayy's responsa, as noted in the various publications of geonic responsa, and compiled a list of twenty-five quires (including three about which it was not explicitly said that they were contained in one tract, but can be viewed as 'divisions').

Aside from the responsa and the commentaries and books, and their fragments that were preserved in the Geniza and that belong to the great treasury of Hayy Gaon's writings, Hayy Gaon was mentioned in many contemporary letters. Especially relevant here are the letters of Maghribi leaders and merchants, which attest to his great influence in the Diaspora communities. He is mentioned in the letters of the sons of Berekhiah, of Jacob b. Nissim, of Nissim b. Jacob, of Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi^c, of the Tāhirtis, of Labrāt b. Moses Ibn Sughmār. The letter of Samuel b. Abraham, i.e., Isma'īl b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī, to Ephraim b. Shemariah, leader of the Palestinians in Fustat, is of special interest. The writer is preparing to leave Mahdiyya for Qayrawān, while in the background there is a deal for the purchase of indigo. It appears that the buyers overpaid and it led to a question of *halākhā*. Involved were the Tāhirtis themselves, who were—it is implied—those who had sold the indigo. Thus they turned to Hayy Gaon, whose responsum sided with the Tāhirtīs. It appears that the conflict between the litigating parties reached the Fustat *bēt dīn*, when there was a joint *bēt dīn* of the 'Palestinians' and the 'Babylonians'. The writer is very interested that the leaders of the Fustat Jews, Ephraim b. Shemariah and Samuel b. Avṭalyon, read the responsum. It is obvious that Hayy Gaon was the halachic authority of the Fustatians (including the 'Palestinians'), despite the special community ties with Palestine. A query appeal to Hayy Gaon is also mentioned in the letter of Labrāt b. Moses Ibn Sughmār, when writing to Nehorai b. Nissim, about twenty years, perhaps more, after the gaon's death. The subject is apparently a responsum of the gaon's regarding inheritances, which one of parties in the litigation of Israel b.

Nathan, Nehorai's cousin, relied upon, in the division of his father's bequest. Nehorai had reservations about Hayy Gaon's responsum, which was known to Nissim b. Jacob. Nissim even found a nice argument against the reservation, but awaited an explicit letter from Nehorai, in order not to be dependent on rumor alone. Also stated therein is that in Mahdiyya they were preparing a copy of a commentary of "our Master...." (the name has not been preserved, neither is the name of the commentary), apparently of Hayy Gaon, apparently for Nehorai, but Lābrat stopped the copying because they found a well-edited copy which they sent to Fustat. I have already elaborated on Hayy Gaon's ties with the Maghrib (above, sec. 120). In one of his responsa to Qābis, he vehemently attacks the acceptance of customs from the Arabic environment: "forbidden are love songs of one person for another and praising a handsome person because of his looks and lauding a strong person for his strength, and the like, such as those poems of Ishmaelites that are called *al-ghazal* (courting songs).... and what you mentioned in the query that the women play drums and dance when men are around, there is nothing worse, not only with drums and dances, even obscene speech is forbidden.... and if the women are alone and there is no man, even that is ugly", etc. We learn from a similar responsum for the Qayrawān people, that for more than two-hundred years (apparently after AD 750, under the Abbasids) Jewish performers had been entertaining the rulers, which was permissible as long as they were faithful and thought about the destruction of the Temple, "and seeking grace as Nehemiah b. Hachaliah, who was the king's cupbearer" (Neh. 1:11).

It appears that caution regarding the customs that became entrenched in the public over generations, was an important factor in Hayy Gaon's solutions to problems that arose in the communities of the Diaspora. Typical in this regard is his responsum to Judah *rōsh ha-seder* b. Joseph, one of the leaders of the Qayrawān community, pertaining to verses that should not be translated (into Aramaic) in the Torah pericope: "as to your custom of reading from 'and pardon' (Exodus 34:9), do not change your practice; as to our customs: if the public wants to change its practices and read these sections the way we do, then fine. But if the public begins to squabble, forget it and go on with your own custom".²³⁵

²³⁵ See Hameiri, to the tractate *Āvōt*, 63f.; cf. Lewin, *Sinai*, 2 (1937/8), 507; the anonymous, see *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 316; regarding *shofar* blowing: Abraham b. David of Posquières, *Temīm De'im*, no. 119; Rapoport, *Tōledōt* 178ff., note 16; list of responsa: Groner, *Alei sefer*, 13 (1985/6); this volume is entirely dedicated to responsa, commentaries and books of Hayy Gaon. On the quires, see his article *ibid.*, 2 (1976/7), 5-16, where he listed five of Hayy Gaon's quires (some of them along with those of his father, Sherira), and see the complete list *ibid.*, 13 (1985/6), 86-90, where there are also discussions on responsa that are apparently Hayy Gaon's, and on responsa ascribed to him that are not his. Letters of the Maghribis: Jacob b. Nissim: 36; Nissim b. Jacob: 162; sons of Berekhiah: 145, 146, 148, 150; Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi': 141, 142; Labrāṭ b. Moses Ibn Sughmār: 616; Isma'īl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrī: 124, 125. On the controversy over the indigo see: 124. The inheritance and appropriation: 616; see the list of books, edited by Poznanski, *ZfHB*, 12 (1908), 119: TS Ar 51.75 (which is the correct shelf-mark) "of Rav Hayy, responsa from Baghdad", cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/8), 349, who shows that the meaning was: of Hayy Gaon, and not as Poznanski understood it, that the people of Baghdad asked the gaon. See Mann, *ibid.*, 11 (1920/1), 449 who edited the beginning of TS 8 G 7, f. 8, which is a fragment of Nissim b. Jacob's *Sefer ha-mafteah* where "a great volume" of Hayy Gaon's responsa is mentioned; edited also by Lewin, see *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Pesāḥim* no. 196 (part of the gaon's responsum), and

(236) We have no definite and precise picture of Hayy Gaon's treatises in exegesis and *halākhā*. Some of the students of Hayy's biography tried to compile lists of his treatises. Some of them are listed in a list in the Geniza: *al-aymān* (oaths), acts of the *bēt dīn* (perhaps: his book of deeds), *al-buyū'* *wa'l-ashriya* (commerce), *adab al-qaḍā'* (learning of sentencing), *al-shuf'a* (adjacent estates); some more of his treatises are mentioned in other Geniza lists. I believe Rapoport was the first modern scholar who attempted to compile a list of Hayy Gaon's treatises; Assaf, as well, listed Hayy Gaon's treatises, reaching a total of twelve, aside from his Talmud commentaries.

Abramson, *Nissim Gaon*, 549f., and see his discussion there. As Mann had assumed, in the "queries of the people of our school" mentioned there, what is meant is the school of the scholars of Qayrawān. See the responsa from the Geniza edited by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 1 (1921/2), 2ff., queries of Nehemiah b. Obadiah and Moses b. Samuel Ibn Jāmi' of Qābis; see *ibid.*, 5ff., his responsum (or it may be that of his father Sherira) regarding the blessing *ōr ḥādāsh* ("new light"), as opposed to the opinion of Saadia Gaon: "it is customary in the permanent schools of Neharde'a and Sura to include this blessing still"; see *ibid.*, 15ff., the responsum to Shemariah b. Elhanan, in the month of Shevat, Sel. 1302, Jan.-Feb. 991; *ibid.*, 2 (1922/3), 18f., "Three responsa of Rav Hayy Gaon"; *ibid.*, 4 (1929/30), 33ff., his responsa regarding the two days of holidays in the Diaspora; *ibid.*, 5 (1933/4), 33f., his responsa to Qābis (against the customs of that region). See *ibid.*, 55ff., a quire of his responsa to Qayrawān, and *ibid.*, no. 59, where he reiterates the bans on musical instruments etc., except when the actions are done only to placate the authorities in order to protect "the sake of Israel", such as was customary in Baghdad "for more than 200 years". The responsum to Judah b. Joseph: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 97 (no. 208), and see, on the prayer customs, the index in *Ōsar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, II, 74ff., many of the responsa on this matter are ascribed to Hayy Gaon; on the other hand, see the responsum of the gaon regarding the Torah blessings: "great love" or "everlasting love" (*Berākhōt*, 11b); *ibid.*, after having surveyed what was customary in the Sura yeshiva and the Pumbedita yeshiva: in both places they only say "everlasting love" during the morning and evening prayers, whereas among the askers of the query, one says "great love" in the morning prayers and "everlasting love" in the evening prayers, based on what was said by the gaon Kohen Šedeq (apparently: b. Joseph); Hayy Gaon summarizes and says: "this is an erroneous custom"; see in Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.* (reprint), 429f. and see his note 432. See the parallels, *Ōsar ha-g. to Berākhōt*, I, 29f., and the discussion in Elbogen, *Jid. Gottesd.*, 20. The Geniza has more of Hayy Gaon's responsa and fragments of responsa, some of which are known from parallel texts in earlier editions; see TS Ar 2, 50.197, edited by Friedman, *Michael*, 5 (1977/8), 225ff., and see the photocopies there, 223f.; TS G 2.67 is the original Arabic version of the responsum included in *Shā'are sedeq*, no. 30; it was edited by Friedman, *Ribbūy n.*, 169-174, and see the photocopy there, slides 36-37. It is in the handwriting of Joseph b. Jacob the Babylonian. In TS Misc 28.186 there is a fragment of a geonic responsum regarding the sum of the bridal money; it appears that the fragment is Hayy Gaon's, in light of some characteristic expressions. It was edited by Friedman, *Jew. Marr.*, I, 228 n. 194, and again in *Shenātōn*, 11-12 (1983/86), 97. It seems that another responsum, on the same matter, was also written by the gaon: TS AS 94.65 + NS 217.20, since on p. 3, line 15 he mentions "this is the law of our Lord and Master Hananiah", and the word *mārānā* (our Lord) is missing when he mentions other geonim, so it seems that here it was Hayy Gaon who was mentioning his grandfather Hananiah; see Friedman, *JLA*, 4 (1981), 108ff. According to Friedman, the responsum in ULC Or 1080.3, 45v is also by Sherira or Hayy, permitting a woman to set the condition that her husband not take another wife, see *idem*, *Ribbūy n.*, 32. See also TS NS 90.2, which is a sheet from a quire containing a collection of queries and responsa of Hayy Gaon; this sheet contains three queries, one in the matter of those forbidden to be with the congregation (Gibeonites, abominators, but only when there is clear proof of such), the other deals with the marriage of an apostate Jew, and the third deals with laws of inheritance; see Friedman, *Te'uda*, 3 (1982/3), 75-82. TS Loan 95.82-75 is a responsum of Hayy Gaon (as in the title) regarding "thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk", which is a responsum to a query raised by an anonymous questioner in one of his letters.

A precise list—to the extent possible—is in Groner's above mentioned work.

Hayy Gaon's Torah commentary is mentioned in the list of books published by Pinsker (after receiving it from Abraham Firkovich): "Hayy Gaon's Torah commentary, bound, complete". Pinsker assumed that it had been written in Hebrew, because it is called *pērūsh*, not Arabic *sharḥ*, or *tafsīr*.²³⁶

(237) Hayy Gaon wrote commentaries to a number of Talmud tractates: *Berākhōt*, *Shabbāt*, *ʿĒrūvīn*, *Ḥagīgā*, *Bēṣā*, *ʿAvōdā zārā*, *Hullīn*. A great part of the commentaries dealt with explanations of words and terms, referred to in the books as *alfāz*.

In a letter written by Sherira and Hayy to Jacob *alūf* Ibn ʿAwkal, it is mentioned that Hayy wrote, especially for Jacob b. Nissim, the treatise "straightening out the ways of the Talmud", in "the language of the Ishmaelites", suitable even for beginners: "even for someone who gropes". We have no way to know what was in the treatise or its scope.

The commentary on *Berākhōt* is mentioned in a list in the Geniza, "*Talmud Berākhōt*", and further: "a volume containing the commentary to *Berākhōt* by our Master Hayy"; it is also mentioned in Judah b. Barzilai's *Sefer ha-ʿittīm*. Mann published fragments of the commentary to *Berākhōt* from 30a to 34b and from 58b to 60a. See also a parallel fragment copied by Nissim b. Jacob and published by Ginzberg. Also found were some Geniza fragments, remnants of his commentary on the tractates *Shabbāt*, *Ḥagīgā*, *Nedārīm*, *ʿAvōdā zārā*, *Yevāmōt*, ("by Hayy *tafsīr* [commentary] to *Sefer ha-galui* the book about *yībūm* and *ḥaliṣā*"; this may be an error) *Giṭṭīn*, *Ketubbōt*, and *Bāvā Batrā*.²³⁷

²³⁶ List of books: see TS NS J 125; from which Allony edited the names of the tracts, see *Alei sefer*, 6 (1978/9), 28ff., and see *ibid.*, 36f., its photocopy; see *ibid.*, 41 references to earlier discussions and publications of some of the gaon's treatises. See Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, I, 166f., 180ff. (notes 19-33), and see Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, II, 32 n. 81, with examples of the ascription of some of Hayy's books to Samuel b. Hophni. See the list in Assaf, *Teg. ha-g.* 201ff.; Groner, *Alei sefer*, 13 (1985/6), 91-105; also: *idem*, *Legal Method.*, 12ff.; the Torah commentary, see Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 191f., n.2; cf. Harkavy, *Me'ass. nidd.*, II, 13 n. 18; Mann, *Texts*, I, 660ff., who edited the manuscript from which Pinsker quoted, which he designated: MS Harkavy K, no. 5; see also the reference to the Torah commentary, *ibid.*, 1b line 18; see Mann's reservations, *ibid.*, 644 and also see note 343 *ibid.*, 683.

²³⁷ "Straightening out the ways of the Talmud", see 33, and cf. Lewin, in Sherira's Letter, xxxii n. a, who was of the opinion that it was the *Sefer mishpeṭ shevū'ot* (rules of oaths); on the other hand, Assaf, *Devir*, 4 (1921/2), 25 n. 3, believed that it was dealing with "talmudic methodology", and for that purpose cited Samuel the Nagid's verse: "...on the Talmud and its concerns and on questions and issues" (see the *divān*, Yarden edition, 233, line 28). The list from the Geniza: Bodl MS Heb d 66, f. 131r, edited by Gottheil: *Abrahams Mem. Vol.*, 156f. Judah of Barcelona, *Sefer ha'ittīm*, 34, regarding Sabbath prayers "...this is the way Hayy Gaon has put it", and see more early citations in Mann, *Hazofeh*, (1921/2), 187, where he also edited the Geniza fragments TS 10 F 4.2; cf. also Epstein, *Hazofeh* (1922/3), 95ff.; Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 1 (1921/2), 104ff. Also see the fragment TS F 3.14e (which is the correct shelf-mark), mentioned in Ginzberg, *Geon.* II, 273 n.1, who also edited it in *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 362ff., in the name of Nissim b. Jacob, who copied it from the gaon's commentary. See the list of fragments and their publications in Groner, *Alei sefer*, 13 (1985/6), 94ff.; see especially: Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 2 (1922/3), 21ff.; Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 207ff.; Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 38 (1962/3), 554f.: "The commentary to [*Berākhōt*] and *Shabbāt* of our Master Hayy [all of it] bound"; the tractate *Shabbāt*: Groner, *ibid.*, 95; *Ḥagīgā*, *ibid.*, 96, and see the colophon TS NS J17, edited by Goitein, *Kiryat sefer*, 31 (1956/7), 370, and also by Gil, *Palest.*, III, 347f. (no. 545): "this book contains the complete

(238) The commentary to *Seder Ṭohorot*: its editor, J.N. Epstein, believed that it was authored by Hayy Gaon, while Assaf believed that it may perhaps be ascribed to Saadia Gaon; attributing the book to Hayy Gaon was also ruled out by Ginzberg; Harkavy attributed it to Hayy Gaon, as did Poznansky. Actually, there are no clear clues in the book regarding its authorship. Other books of Hayy Gaon's are *kitāb al-shuḥḥa*—a book which deals with the laws of adjacent estates; *adab al-qaḍā'* (learning of sentencing; in Hebrew: *Sefer ha-dayyānīn*, book of the judges), is mentioned in a number of Geniza fragments and deals with the laws regarding the *dayyān*'s activities; the laws of *sheḥīṭa*—a book mentioned by the Karaite Yefet b. Ša'ir, and also in a list of books stating that it is found at the beginning of a volume with some tractates of the Talmud; the laws of *issūr* and *hētēr* (forbidden and permitted)—a treatise, one assumes, is mentioned in a passage in another of the gaon's books, "of commerce": "the laws of sale, what was permitted or forbidden to be sold. You should know that it is commented upon at full length in another treatise that I wrote", etc.; "the laws of *tefillīn*", that was published by B.M. Lewin, from two manuscripts; it appears to have been a short treatise, not really a book; the book "of commerce", onto which small treatises have been attached, about pledges and conditions, and all the laws of loans; it was translated into Hebrew by Isaac b. Reuben of Barcelona, in 1078, and published a number of times. Abramson published a large fragment of its Arabic original, from the Geniza. Its name in Arabic, as already mentioned: *al-buyū' wa'l-ashriyā*. The book of deeds that we have in the edition of S. Assaf, who added to it a fragment from the Mosseri collection, *kitāb al-aymān*, the book of the laws of oaths, is mentioned in a list of books in the Geniza and in the book of responsa *Sha'arē sedeq*, with the editor's note: "as to your query whether we found a column from the book of oaths of our Lord, here it is in the book the laws of oaths, of our Master Hayy Gaon of blessed memory". In the version of a query to Hayy Gaon, mentioned is "what our Lord wrote in his book of oaths", which is, of course, the *kitāb al-aymān*. The book, known in Hebrew translation, was first published at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This may have been one of the first treatises the gaon wrote, judging by its mention in the *kitāb al-ḥawī*, which is the *sefer ha-kōlēl*, or the *me'assēf*, a kind of concordance edited according to the example of the Arabic dictionaries. Jalāl al-dawla, Solomon *ha-nāsī* b. Jesse's assistant, writes to the *nāsī* (a descendant of the exilarchic dynasty), living in Bilbays (as to these *nesī'im* see below, sec. 257), and mentions in his letter that they had succeeded in obtaining a manuscript of *al-ḥawī*. In a list of books in the Geniza, we see: "the *alef* in *al-ḥawī* of our Master Hayy of blessed memory", i.e., the part where the words are arranged after the letter *alef*. Fragments of the book, from the Geniza, were first published by Harkavy, in 1896, and later in his addenda to Grätz. The book is a kind of concordance arranged along anagram lines,

clear commentary of the tractate *Ḥagīgā* by our Master Hayy Gaon" etc.; "I Abiathar ha-Kohen, the fourth in the yeshiva, copied it for myself", etc.; it was Abiathar ha Kohen b. Elijah, later to become gaon of Palestine; and the time: 16 July 1067, nearly 30 years after the death of Hayy Gaon. The tractate *Nedārīm*: Groner, *ibid.*, 96; *ʿAvōdā zārā*, *ibid.*; *Yevāmōt*, see Adler and Broydē, *JQR*, 13 (1900/1), 55; *Giṭṭīn*: Groner, *ibid.*, 100f.; *Ketubbōt*: *ibid.*, 98f.; *Bāvā Batrā*: *ibid.*, 97.

with each root presented in each significant sequence of letters, for example: *ōhel* (tent): *ēle* (these), *ha-lō* (is it not?), *ha'el* (God), *Leah*.

Evidence of Hayy Gaon's medical endeavors is in a Geniza fragment with the title, "the chapter of *the ill* by the gaon Hayy, may the memory of the righteous be blessed". The fragment contains instructions for a mixture of medicinal herbs and the like.

Among the books ascribed to Hayy Gaon, but are not in fact of his authorship, is the *pitrōn ha-ḥalōmōt*, the *Solution of Dreams*, which as Rapoport has already shown, is nothing but a forgery, proof of which is: Rashi is mentioned there.

Hayy Gaon also penned many liturgical poems; though some of the poems ascribed to him still need to be studied to determine whether they are indeed his. The first collection of his poems was published in Paris, in 1560, the *Poems of mūsar haskēl* (*morals*), that has been published in a number of editions at later times. See also the edition of all his poems, containing also his *shema' qōlī* (hearken unto my voice), and a rhymed version of the "book of oaths", that I mentioned above. The *reshūyōt* (cantor's prayers) for the biblical pericopes, ascribed to him, that were found at the top of every pericope in the book *pitrōn tōrā*, was edited by Yishai Hasida. Liturgical poems and songs of praise of Hayy Gaon's which were found in the Geniza, were published by H. Brody, wherein is a rhyme expressing the gaon's feelings, perhaps in connection to the persecution he suffered that has been alluded to in some of the above mentioned sources: "we children of the mother are slaves to the children of the concubine, and the worshippers of God to the worshippers of idols".

A fine example of Hayy Gaon's rich language and his great poetic ability, among other areas also offering new patterns for ancient roots, is the lengthy prologue in his letter to Judah *rōsh ha-seder* b. Joseph, of Qayrawān. The gaon began writing it at noon and completed it in the evening: "at noontide I commenced, and by eventide I was done".²³⁸

²³⁸ Commentary to the order *Ṭohorōt*, see its edition and the editor's introduction, Epstein, *Gaon. Komm.* One complete manuscript of this commentary has survived (MS Berlin 685), and there are also fragments in the Geniza; see Assaf, *Teg. ha-g.*, 144ff., for a survey of the discussion regarding the authorship problem; see also Ginzberg, *Geon.* I, 172. The *Ṭohorōt* commentary was first edited by Rosenberg, *Qōveš*. See Harkavy, *Had. gam Yesh.* (reprint), 113, Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 198. The commentary is mentioned in TS Loan 149 1b, line 24, see Mann, *Texts*, I, 645. Hayy Gaon wrote much about the meanings of words, and there is mention of a quire with explanations of difficult words in the tractate *Avōdā zārā*, see Steinschneider, *Heb. Bibliogr.*, 4 (1861), 107, *idem*, in JZWL, 1 (1862), 313 n. 20, from a manuscript in the Bodleian Libr., Huntingdon 345. "*Kitāb al-shuf'a* of Hayyā(!)" is mentioned in a list of books from the Geniza, see in Mann, *Texts*, I, 655, line 86; see references to citations from the list, in Groner, *Alei sefer*, 13 (1985/6), 91. *Adab al-qaḍā'* see Mosseri III. 235, where it is mentioned, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 7 (1935/6), 217f.; see Abraham Maimuni, *Resp.* (Freimann-Goitein eds.), 169, Anatoli b. Joseph's letter to Abraham Maimuni: "...if somebody does not accept (this rule) let him go check in the book *adab al-qaḍā'* by rabbēnū Hayy...." See more references in the lists of books: Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 43 (1967/8), 131; *idem*, *Alei sefer*, 6-7 (1978/9), 30; more citations and references: Groner, *Alei sefer*, 13 (1985/6), 91f.; the laws of *sheḥitā*, see the list of books in Mann, *Texts*, I, 651 (without mentioning the name of the author); and see *ibid.*, 675 n.187, the view that instead of "laws of *shemittā*" (sabbatical year), in the list edited by Adler and Broydé in *JQR*, 13 (1900/1), 54, no. 47, one should read "laws of *sheḥitā*"; this list was re-edited and annotated by Abramson, *Kiryat sefer*, 26 (1949/50), 83-92 (still without the shelf-

mark) and he did indeed find, using a photocopy, that *sheḥīlā*, not *shemittā*, is written; see *ibid.*, note 40. See also Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.* 202 (no. 12); Groner, *Alei sefer*, 13 (1985/6), 92. Issūr and *hēlēr*, see *Sefer ha-meqqah we-ha-mimkār* (1800 edition), 89b (beginning of ch. lv), no. 6. Cf. Assaf, *Hazofeh*, 7 (1922/3), 284; Groner, *ibid.*, 92; *Hilekhōt tefillm*, see Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5), from a manuscript from Italy, at the Jewish Theological Seminary New York; *idem*, *ibid.*, 4 (1929/30), 10, a Bodleian fragment; Groner, *ibid.*; *Sefer ha-meqqah we-ha-mimkār*, see Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, 167, 181 nn. 22, 23; its Hebrew version was printed in Venice (1602), Vienna (1800); its Arabic fragment: from Bodl MS Heb d 32, see Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 20 (1948/9), 296ff.; he notes, 296, that he collected 33 Geniza fragments of this book; see mention of this book in the list edited by Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 43 (1967/8), 132; *idem*, *Alei sefer*, 6-7, (1938/9), 30. See the article by Havazelet, *Tarbiz*, 35 (1965/6), 39ff., with an extensive discussion about the book and comparisons with the *hilekhōt mekhūrā* of Maimonides and the list in the *maggīd mishnē* (of Don Vidal Yōm Tōv of Tolosa) in the introduction to the *hilekhōt mekhūrā*. See Assaf's introduction to the *Sefer ha-sheḥīrōt*, with references to the manuscripts; another fragment: Mosseri VI. 207; see also Assaf, *Mi-sifr. ha-g.*, 40ff. *Kitāb al-aymān*: Mann, *Texts*, I, 650; lines 155-156: "the book of oaths, starting with a shortened book containing all main points of these laws", *ibid.*, 655, line 85; 657, line 157: "the book of oaths, by Hayyā"; see Mann's notes to these places; Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 43 (1967/8), 131; *idem*, *Alei sefer*, 6-7 (1978/9), 30. See the editor's note (in 1606) in *Shā'arē sedeq*, 72a (no. 6); see the version of the query to Hayy Gaon, in Harkavy, *Resp.*, 83 (no. 182), 357, where there is a misprint of the query's number. Harkavy mentions there a treatise containing a rhymed version of Hayy's "rules of oaths", versified by "the respected scholar R. Levi b. Jacob al-Qalī". See this versified version in Halberstam, *Ginzē nist.*, 3 (1871/2), 31-69. The book was printed in Venice in AM 5363 (1603), then in Hamburg, in 5542 (1782), see Azulai, *Shem ha-gedōlīm*, 69a: "chapters on oaths by rabbēnū Hayy Gaon, which I, the mean one, saw on parchment in *hagarī* (Arabic) language... since thus their author wrote them". See Rapoport, *Tōledōt* (reprint), I, 167, 180f., nn. 21, 22. See also: Poznanski, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 312; Assaf, *Hazofeh*, 7 (1922/3), 277; *idem*, *Mi-sifr. ha-g.* (1933), 42ff. *Kitāb al-hāwī*, probably called also *ha-egrōn*, see the list of books from the Geniza, ed. Assaf, *Kiryat sefer*, 18 (1940-1942), 274, upper line. Jalāl al-dawla: 97b, line 6. The *alef*: TS 10 K 20, f. 7, see it in Mann, *REJ*, 72 (1921), 181 (no. 26). See Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, 185 n. 29, and also Neubauer, *JA*, 5-ème sér., 20 (1862), 211ff.; see Harkavy, *Mi-mizr. ū-mi-ma'ar.*, 3 (1895/6), 94ff., where he complains of the fact that the director of *Meqīṣē nirdāmīm* does not publish the *kitāb al-hāwī*, while "the babblings of the insignificant poets of Italy are considered by him more important than the books of the main people of scholarship and learning among the Jews, who are the geonim, 'heads of the thousands in Israel' (Num 1:16)... people of France, when compared with R. Saadia Gaon and R. Hayy Gaon are like apes compared to people of high esteem, truly and rightly so, whom Jews will eternally glorify". See also *idem*, *Ḥad. gam yesh.*, 111ff.; also: Steinschneider, *ZDMG*, 55 (1901), 129ff., who explains how the book was arranged and has a survey of medieval sources citing it; *idem*, *Ar. Lit. d. Jud.*, 100; Poznanski, *ZDMG*, 55 (1901), 597ff. (following Steinschneider's article); *idem*, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 312, with more references and citations. See a fragment of *al-Hāwī* edited by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5), 69ff.; Abramson, *Leṣonenu*, 41 (1976/7), 108ff., notes that he has collected fragments of *al-Hāwī*, as mentioned by the earliest scholars and from the Geniza, and edits a fragment as illustration; *ibid.*, 112, he cites the gaon's explanation of 'Uvelin (Tosefta, *Ḥerivīm*, 1:2), "which is the well-known city Ubulia". Abramson, *ibid.*, 109, understood that the gaon meant Abila, in Syria; but he undoubtedly meant Ubulia; see also Groner, *Alei sefer*, 13 (1985/6), 93, who has more references concerning mentions of *al-Hāwī*. The chapter of the ill, see: Mosseri I, 122. The "solution of dreams" see Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, 186 n. 33. The poems of Hayy: *Shīrē mūsar haskēl*, Fano 1505, Paris 1560; see the Steinschneider edition, Berlin 1860, and the Weiss edition, Warsaw 1893, with notes of the editors. "If a ruler chooses you, do not disappoint him, and do not reveal any secret of his, and even if he travels far away from his abode, guard his house as if he was in it", see the Weiss edition, 65, where the verses appear to be geared towards the *negīdīm*, of the Maghrib and of Spain, Abraham b. 'Atā' and Samuel Ibn Naghrila. See *kol shīrē rav hayy gā'ōn*, edited by Reifmann *et alii*, Lemberg 1889. See *reshūyōt* for the Torah pericopes, ed. Hasida, Jerusalem 1976/7. See Brody's article on *piyyūṭīm* and laudatory poems of Hayy Gaon, in *Yedī'ōt ha-mākhōn*, 3 (1932/3), 3-64; see *ibid.*, 5, a review of scholarly discussions beginning with Rapoport, on the problems of authorship of poems ascribed to Hayy Gaon,

A Chronological List of the Geonim of Sura and Pumbedita

<i>Sura</i>		<i>Pumbedita</i>	
Rav Mar Bar Hūnā	until 591	Ḥanan of Ishqiya	from 589
Ḥananiah (Ḥinenai)	ca. 610	Marī b. Dīmī	ca. 591
		Ḥanina (Ḥinenai) of Bet	ca. 610
Hūnā	ca. 650	Guhrā	
		Rabbā (Rāvā) b. Hūnā	651
		Isaac	ca. 651
Sheshnā (Mesharshayā)	ca. 670	Bustanai (Būsai)	ca. 660
		Hūnā	ca. 680
Ḥananiah ha-Kohen of Nahr	ca. 689-694	Hūnā b. Joseph	from 689
Pāqōd		Ḥiyya of Mēshān	ca. 700
Hillai (Nehillai) ha-Levi of Narash	694-712	Rabiyā Moronai	ca. 710
Jacob ha-Kohen of Nahr Pāqōd	712-730	Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah	from 719
		(bar Mar Yanqā)	
Samuel Rabbā's grandson	730-748	Judah	ca. 730
		Joseph b. Kūtnai	739-748
Marī ha-Kohen of Nahr Pāqōd	748-756	Samuel b. Rav Mar	ca. 748-755
		(Marī)	
Aḥā	in 756	Naṭrūnai (Naṭroi) ha-	ca. 755-761
		Kohen b. Emūnā	
Judah b. Naḥmān	757-761	Abraham ha-Kohen	apparently in 761
Ahūnai (Hūnā) ha-Kohen b. Papa	761-769	Davidai b. Naḥman	761-767
Ḥanina ha-Kohen b. Ahūnai	769-774	Ḥananiah b. Mesharshayā	767-771
(Hūnā)		(=b. Sheshnā)	
Marī ha-Levi b. Mesharshayā	774-778	Malkā b. Aḥā	771-773

and see the verses "we children of the mother", etc., *ibid.*, 42, line 14. See Schirmann, *Shirim ḥadāshim*, 70ff., who edits an anonymous poem that he ascribes to Hayy Gaon, see lines 33ff.: "Ever since I came to 'Adīna (= Baghdad), this was my path... and I was sat upon the seat of my forefathers... when (the news of) my gaonate reached them, there were days of joy...". Also further down there are words of praise about a letter he received, and it says: "the pact between the two of us has never been breached". Again, it might have been addressed to one of the two above-mentioned *negīdīm*, or perhaps to Sahlān b. Abraham in Fustat. See also Brody, *Sinai*, 2 (1937/8), 516ff., on the gaon's poems; Raphael (Werfel), *ibid.*, 592ff., published 25 poems of the gaon, inclusive of the rhymed versions of *sha'arē dīnē memōnōt* (chapters about financial rules), and *sha'arē shevū'ot* (chapters about oaths); TS 13 J 11, f.6 is a fragment of a dirge, in the handwriting of Hayy Gaon or of his permanent scribe; see Yavin, *Massōret ha-lāshōn*, 229 (line10): its scansion is Spanish and the pronunciation Tiberian; as to the Spanish scansion, see on Spanish influence in the gaon's poems: Fleischer, *Habermann Jub. Vol.*, 258ff. The pronunciation: Hayy Gaon permanently constructs his rhymes according to the Tiberian pronunciation (Prof. Ezra Fleischer in his letter to me, 27 April 1994); however the ascription of this dirge to Hayy Gaon needs more examination by students of Hebrew poetry. Fleischer, *Sinai*, 67 (1969/70), 180ff., identified a series of six *selihōt*, which he ascribed to Hayy Gaon; although most poetical figures of speech are taken from the Bible, they appear to echo the personal sufferings of the gaon and the persecutions he suffered from his anonymous enemies. Fleischer adds there two more *piyyūfīm* of the gaon. See also his articles in *Habermann Jub. Vol.*, 239ff.; *Habermann Mem. Vol.*, 109ff.; *Mehqerē yerushalayim le-sifrut 'ivrūt*, 10-11 (1986-1988), 661ff., and see *ibid.*, 662 n. 2, the last of the gaon's poems preserved in the Geniza. The letter to Judah b. Joseph, see TS Loan 1 together with Bodl MS Heb d 47, f.3, ed. Mann, *Texts*, I, 126ff., and see the preamble therein, 115-117. The Bodleian fragment had been previously edited by Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 278f.; see Chajes, *ZfB*, 14 (1910), 23ff., who knew of only a part of the letter, and assumed it to be part of a great halachic work. (See in the Hebrew version of this book, 401, in the note, a series of corrections of the text as edited by Mann.)

Bīboi ha-Levi b. Abbā of Nahr Pāqōd	778-789	Abbā (Rāvā) b. Davidai	773-782
		Shīnūi	in 782
		Ḥaninai ha-Kohen b. Abraham	782-786
		Hūnā ha-Levi b. Isaac	786-788
Hillai b. Marī	789-798	Menashe b. Joseph	788-796
		Isaiah ha-Levi b. Abbā	796-798
Jacob ha-Kohen b. Mordecai	798-810	Ravrevay ha-Kohen b. Ḥaninai	804-810
Isaac Šādōq b. Jesse	810-812	Ikhōmai ha-Kohen b. Abraham	810-814
Hillai b. Ḥananiah	812-816	Joseph b. Abbā	814-816
Qīmoi b. Ashī	816-820	Abraham b. Sherira	816-828
Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob	820-830	Joseph b. Ḥiyyā	828-833
Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai	832-843	Isaac b. Ḥananiah (Hunai)	833-839
		Joseph b. Ravrevay	839-841
Sar Shālōm b. Boaz	843-853	Paltoi b. Abayē	841-858
Naṭrūnai b. Hillai b. Marī	853-861	Aḥā ha-Kohen b. Mar Rav	in 858
°Amram b. Sheshnā	861-872	Menaḥem b. Joseph b. Ḥiyyā	858-860
		Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevay b. Ḥanīna	860-869
Naḥshōn b. Isaac Šādōq	872-879	Abbā (Rabbā) b. Amī b. Samuel	869-872
Šemaḥ b. Ḥayyim	879-886	Isaac Šemaḥ b. Paltoi	872-889
Malkā	in 886	Hayy b. David	889-896
Hayy b. Naḥshōn b. Isaac Šādōq	886-896	Qīmoi ha-Kohen b. Aḥī b. Marī	896-905
Hillai b. Naṭrūnai b. Hillai	896-904	Judah b. Samuel	905 Sept. 2 – 917 Feb.
Shalom b. Mishael	904-907	Mevasser ha-Kohen b. Qīmoi	917 Feb. to end of 922
°Amram b. Solomon	907-911	Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph	917 Feb. – 935
Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai	911-924	Šemaḥ b. Kafnai	935-937 Nov.
Yom Tōv ha-Kohen b. Jacob	924-925	Ḥananiah b. Judah	937 Dec. – 943
Hayy b. Qiyūmi (Qāyōmā)	925-927	Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (=Khalaf b. Sarjada)	943-960 Aug.
(these details of the four geonim, 907-927, are questionable, due to the contradictions between Sherira's <i>Letter</i> and Nathan the Babylonian [above, sec. 204])			
Saadia b. Joseph al-Fayyūmī	928 May 15 – 942 May 17		
Joseph b. Jacob bar Saṭyā	ca. 930	Nehemiah ha-Kohan b. Kohen Šedeq	960 Aug. – 968
Šemaḥ Šedeq b. Paltoi b. Isaac	ca. 990-ca. 998	Sherira b. Ḥananiah	968 - 1006 Sept. 3
Šemaḥ b. Paltoi			
Samuel ha-Kohen b. Hophni	ca. 998-1012	Hayy b. Sherira	1004-1038 Mar.
Dōsā b. Saadia	1012 Sept.-1018 Jan.		
Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Hophni	1018 Jan.-1033 Oct. 30		

ʿAzariah ha-Kohen b. Samuel b.	eleventh century
Hophni	
Isaac	eleventh century

13. *Some Jewish personalities of the second half of the tenth century*

(239) As we have seen, there are a number of sources at our disposal for the geonim of the period; but the details to be gleaned from the sources about other Jewish personalities are very sparse.

ABRAHAM B. MŪMAR (should perhaps be: Muʿammar, since Mūmar means apostate) al-Ṣayrafi (which means: the banker), a student of Saadia Gaon. He wrote a book by the name of *kitāb al-kashf* (book of disclosure), which is mentioned in a list of books in the Geniza. The book's owner only had the second half; there is no information about the book's contents.

ṬŌV'S GRANDSON, whose name we do not know, but may surmise that it was: Naḥshōn. In his letter, written in 953, he supplies many details about the Pumbedita yeshiva and also about his family. On his paternal side he was a descendant of Palṭoi b. Abayē (gaon, 841-858); ṬŌv, the writer's grandfather, was the son of Isaac Ṣemaḥ (872-889) b. Palṭoi b. Abayē, i.e., he was Palṭoi b. Abayē's grandson. We learn that ṬŌv was chief judge of the Pumbedita Court. The grandson of ṬŌv mentioned in his letter his grandfather's grandfather, "our Lord and Master Palṭoi head of the yeshiva, of blessed memory", and his ties with Spain; his grandfather, "our Lord ṬŌv chief judge of the yeshiva"; Ṣādōq (i.e., Isaac Ṣādōq) "head of the yeshiva of Mātā Maḥsīya"; Ṣādōq's son, Naḥshōn, "gaon of Maḥsīya", and the brother of Naḥshōn—"Mar Rav Moses who is my mother's father"; i.e., on his mother's side "the grandson of ṬŌv" was a descendant of the gaon of Sura, Isaac Ṣādōq b. Jesse (810-812); he also mentions Judah Gaon (b. Samuel), Sherira's grandfather (Judah Gaon: 905-917); the above mentioned Moses (Mīshoi) b. Isaac Ṣādōq, is Sherira's grandfather on his mother's side; the two of them, Judah and Moses, were scribes of the above mentioned (Isaac) Ṣemaḥ b. Palṭoi, gaon of Pumbedita. When he wrote that letter (953) the gaon of Pumbedita was Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (i.e., Khalaf b. Sarjāda), about whom the writer says: "the robber sought to swallow and devour them" (the donations sent from Spain via the descendants of the family of "the sons of Aaron"—Aaron and Moses, the sons of Abraham b. Aaron—under the aegis of "our *nāsī* Solomon the exilarch"). He asks the addressee, a Spaniard, for monetary support for himself. The writer was an in-law of Sherira's family, for Sherira's grandfather, Judah Gaon, married the daughter of Isaac Ṣemaḥ Gaon, i.e., the sister of the writer's paternal grandfather; thus Judah Gaon, through marriage, was the writer's brother-in-law. Moses' (Mīshoi's) b. Isaac Ṣādōq's daughter was married to the writer's father, i.e., she was the mother of that "grandson of ṬŌv". The writer's mother's sister—apparently much younger than she—i.e., another daughter of Moses (Mīshoi), was married to Judah's son Ḥananiah, and was Sherira's mother. ṬŌv's grandson, the writer of the letter, a descendant of Palṭoi b. Abayē, thus had double family ties with Sherira: with Sherira's father's family and the family of Isaac Ṣādōq b. Jesse. He himself was a scholar—in all events, this

is what we learn from what he writes—for he asks the addressee to send him queries “either from the Bible or the Mishnā, or the Talmud, so that I may respond as we were taught by God our Teacher”. It is he who apparently was the ‘Kaḥshon’ written of by Nehemiah Gaon (above, sec. 147).

ṬŌV HA-KOHEN *alūf* b. Nehemiah Gaon, is twice mentioned in his father’s letters: “Ṭōv, our boy”, and possibly also in two other places: “Ṭōv *alūf*”, and *alūf* (without the name), meaning Nehemiah’s son, though here there is some doubt. The time of his mention in his father’s letters is ca. 962-963, and there is no other information about him. It appears that after his father’s death he was shunted aside completely, it may also be that he died before his father at a young age.

The second half of the tenth century is when ʿALI B. ʿĪSĀ IBN QŪSĪN, who was learned in medicine, flourished, and who was famous in his day. He lived in Mosul. He was a Jew who converted to Islam, and even wrote a tract (*maqāla*) polemicizing with the Jews.

ḤEḤEŠ *alūf* B. MAŠLIAH THE ‘ASSYRIAN’, wrote a book of precepts. This book is mentioned by Sahlān b. Abraham, the leader of the ‘Babylonians’ in Fustat, when still young, in a letter to his father Abraham. He wrote that he purchased with four gold pieces (dinars) “the book of *mišwōt* by R. ḤeḤeš *alūf*, b. Mašliāh the Assyrian”. The letter was apparently written in Alexandria at the end of the tenth century, or the beginning of the eleventh. The name *Ashūr*, ‘Assyria’, in that period meant the city of Mosul. ḤeḤeš is mentioned in a number of medieval books: by Jonah Ibn Janāḥ and Judah Ibn Bilʿam. Halper published a large fragment from the *sefer ha-mišwōt* along with an introduction and translation (from Judeo-Arabic) into Hebrew. It should be noted that there is occasional mention of the *Book of Precepts* of Hefesh, and sometimes of *Sefer Hefesh*, in medieval writings. Fragments of ḤeḤeš b. Mašliāh’s *Book of Precepts*, or that were supposed were his, were published by Neubauer and by Assaf. Danzig recently published fragments found in pages used to bind a Latin manuscript, and he concluded that therein were first discovered fragments of *Sefer Hefesh* that were not ḤeḤeš b. Mašliāh’s *Book of Precepts*, as some students had already assumed.

Evidence of Mosul’s being then a center of learning is in the *kitāb al-manāẓir* (*Book of watchtowers*) written by a Mosul man, Abūʾl-Khayr Ṭābā b. Ṣalāḥūn (it appears that his Hebrew name was Ṭōv b. Mašliāh), who completed the writing in the spring of 983. The treatise contains records compiled after meetings of a learned circle dedicated to biblical issues. In a number of places the treatise mentions Ephraim *rōsh kallā*, this was certainly Ephraim b. Jacob ha-Kohen b. Saṭyā (above, secs. 144, 213).²³⁹

²³⁹ Abraham b. Muʾammar: see Schechter, *Saadyana*, 79, who edited there a fragment from TS Loan 149; cf. Poznanski, *ZfHB*, 7 (1903), 112, 184 (no. 2) where, following Schechter, he read: *al-waṣf* (‘the description’) instead of *al-niṣf* (‘the half’). See also *idem*, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 264. The grandson of Ṭōv (Naḥshōn?), see his letter: 13; cf. Mann, *HUC Jub. Vol.*, 229ff.; *idem*, *HUCA*, 3 (1926), 309f.; *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 173f.; see also Marx, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 768; Rosenthal, *Shenāṭon*, 11-12 (1985/6), 596. Mentions of Ṭōv ha-Kohen in the letters of his father, Nehemiah: 14, line 8; 16, line 4; 17, line 9; 18, line 17; he seems to have mentioned him also in 15, in the part which has not been preserved. Lewin, in Sherira’s *Letter*, 133, and Mann, *Texts*, I, 73 n.31, read *ḥōvē baḥūrēynū* instead of *Ṭōv baḥūrēnū* (i.e., our son). Ibn Qūsīn: Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, 333; cf. Steinschneider, *Pol. u.*

(240) In AH 387, AD 997, the Ya'qūbite Abū 'Alī 'Isā b. Ishāq Ibn Zur'a wrote a study deliberating with the Jew BISHR B. PINḤAS B. SHU'AYB B. 'UNĀBA *al-ḥāsib* (the mathematician) on the abrogation of *halākḥā*, the advent of the messiah and the holy trinity. He mentions his Jewish friend, one ABŪ'L-KHAYR DA'ŪD B. MŪSAJ, who was of the *mutakallimūn*, i.e., one of the discussants of religious questions. When writing the article, David was no longer alive, for the aforementioned Ibn Zur'a adds the blessing for the departed: *raḥimahu allah*. Ibn Zur'a would have discussions with him about the resurrection of the dead. Another Arabic writer, a Muslim who was also a contemporary, Ibn Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, mentions among the participants of the councils (the *majālis*) of Baghdad scholars at about 960, the Jew Abū'l-Khayr, a reasonable assumption being that this was the same Da'ūd b. Mūsaj; elsewhere he says that there were philosophers of other religions, not only Muslims, such as Ibn Zur'a, who was a Christian, and such as Abū'l-Khayr b. Ya'īsh; but some mistake has entered in, for what should be said is Abū'l-Khayr *wa-Wahb* b. Ya'īsh; indeed Wahb b. Ya'īsh, of Raqqa, a contemporary of Da'ūd b. Mūsaj, was

apolog. Lit., 98 (no. 70). Chapiro, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5), 7 assumed that "the boasting traitor" whom Elhanan b. Shemariah opposed, as said by the gaon of Sura Ṣemah Sedeq b. Isaac in 45, was Ibn Qūṣīn, but the assumption is unfounded. Sahlān's letter: ENA 4020, f.18, in Mann, *Tarbiz*, 6 (1934/5), 80ff., and see there the mention of Hefes, p. 83, line 40; cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 593 n. 80; see the discussion in Mann, *ibid.* 5 (1933/4), 277ff.; he assumed that the writer was not our Sahlān (of the first half of the eleventh century) but his grandfather, but insufficient grounds exist for his arguments. See what Halper edited, and the mention of Hefes b. Yašliāh (in Jonah Ibn Janāh: Hefes *rōsh kallā*), in: Halper, *A Volume*, 100-117. A list of writings where Hefes is mentioned was also compiled by Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, II, 123, and see there in the continuation his arguments, that Hefes was head of the Palestinian yeshiva in the days of Hayy Gaon. See Lewin, in the Introduction to *Sefer metivōt*, on p. xxxvi he argues against Aptovitz, who assumed that *Sefer metivōt* and *Sefer hefes* are identical. See more arguments of Mann, concerning Hefes b. Yašliāh and *Sefer hefes*, in *Tarbiz*, 6 (1934/5) 238f.; also see there his discussion with Lewin, who also assumed that Hefes was head of the Palestinian yeshiva (as did Rapoport, but his opinion has not been noticed). Mann expressed his doubts there about the identification of *Sefer hefes* as *Sefer ha-miṣwōt*. Neubauer, *JQR*, 6 (1903/4), 705ff., edited Bodl MS Heb d34, f. 108, which, he assumed, was a fragment from Hefes b. Yašliāh's *Sefer ha-miṣwōt*; Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 15 (1943/4), 31ff., edited a manuscript found in the library of the AIU in Paris, without mention of its shelf-mark; and two additional fragments: AIU III B 16; AIU III C 31bis; see more fragments in Zucker, *PAAJR*, 29 (1960/1), in the Hebrew part, 1ff.; cf. also Bloch, *REJ*, 5 (1882), 37ff.; Marx, *JQR*, NS 1 (1910/11), 439, discusses the above-mentioned letter of Sahlān b. Abraham. Poznanski, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 313, opposed the view of Steinschneider, that Hefes b. Yašliāh was a personage from Qayrawān. Aptowitz, *Tarbiz*, 4 (1932/3), 127ff., has a survey of earlier research, showing parallelism between opinions ascribed to Hefes b. Yašliāh (on a woman who lost her *ketubbā*—above sec. 223), the responsum of Sherira on this matter (see Harkavy, *Resp.*, 97ff., no. 210), and a responsum of Ṣemah Gaon (Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 212), he concluded that Hefes was a contemporary of Sherira Gaon; he also argued that the *Sefer hefes* and *Sefer ha-miṣwōt* are identical, and made a peculiar proposal there, namely, to call Hefes: *ha-ashūrī*, that is, a person from Ashūr in the Maghrib; Lewin and Mann have already written their arguments against it (see above in this note). See the citation from Hefes b. Yašliāh in Judah Ibn Bil'am, in Fuchs, *Studien*, xxii; see another citation, in Abramson, *Shelōshā sefarim*, 47. See the article by Danzig, *JQR*, NS 82: 51, 1991, and the facsimile of the manuscript, after p. 110, and its edition, *ibid.*, 114ff., and his review of the research, at the beginning of his article. See the description of the *Kitāb al-manāẓir* by Ben-Shammai in *Pe'amim*, 41 (1989/90), 21-31, from MS Firkovitch II, 1679; and see *ibid.*, 23 n. 8, about his project of a complete edition of the work. The treatise had been briefly described by Mann, *Texts*, I, 478 n.5 (*supra*, sec. 144).

one of the Jewish humanists of the time; the unavoidable conclusion is that the here mentioned Abū'l-Khayr was none other than Da'ūd b. Mūsaj.

The Karaite Ibn al-Hītī, while listing the central Karaite figures through the generations, mentions among the learned Karaites in Baghdad, ABŪ'L-ḤASAN (should be Abū'l-Ḥusayn) b. Maṣḥīah, who argued with Saadia Gaon; he also further mentions Abū 'Īsā b. Zur'a (he writes: b. Sur'a) and the epistle he wrote in AH 387, in which he mentioned Ibn Maṣḥīah; he is also mentioned (Ḥasūn, or Ḥasan or Ḥusayn [what is correct is Abū'l-Ḥusayn], b. Maṣḥīah the Karaite) elsewhere as well—in the letter of rebuke of Sahl b. Maṣḥīah and in Ibn Ezra; in the *Controversy between Karaites and Rabbanites* David b. Ḥusayn (or Ḥasūn) is mentioned among the Karaite personalities. It seems to me that one should assume that these are two Karaite personalities, father and son, Ḥusayn and David, of the Maṣḥīah family. As to Abū'l-Ḥusayn David b. Maṣḥīah, he seems to be none other than David b. Mūsaj of the Arabic sources, because of the corruption *Mūsaj* (Graf has already felt that that Ibn Mūsaj is a corruption and thought that it should be Ibn Muṣḥāḥ), despite the different *kunyas*: Abū'l-Khayr, Abū'l-Ḥusayn.

Here we have seen a group of four Jewish intellectuals: the Karaites Ḥusayn and his son David, of the Ibn Maṣḥīah family (in the Arabic sources: Ibn Mūsaj); Bishr b. Pinḥas b. Shu'ayb Ibn 'Unāba (apparently identical with Mevasser-Bishr ha-Levi b. Nīsī, who wrote the disagreements with Saadia Gaon, above, sec. 212); and Wāḥb b. Ya'īsh, of Raqqa. They flourished in the second half of the tenth century. They were part of a circle of scholars and thinkers of different religions that was centered—according to the testimony of Abū'l-Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī—around his teacher, Abū Muḥammad Ibn Ṭāḥir al-Sijistānī al-Mantiqī (who died in 1009).²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ See on Ibn Zur'a: Ibn al-Nadīm, 4, 26; Ibn al-Qifṭī, 245f.; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (Beirut), 318f.; Ibn al-'Ibrī, *al-Duwal*, 315; cf. Graf, *Or. Christ.*, 116; *idem*, GCAL, II, 252; Ibn Zur'a was born in Baghdad in 943 and died in 1007. Bishr b. Pinḥas (the original has: ben Bīsh) b. 'Anāyā (should be: Ibn 'Unāba) wrote a *risāla* (epistle) as an answer on the above-mentioned article of Ibn Zur'a, according to Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (above, in this note); cf. Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit. d. J.*, 106. See the comments of Ibn Zur'a on Da'ūd b. Mūsaj, in Sbat, *Vingt traités*, 47. See Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt*, 371; *idem*, *Imtā'*, II, 14; cf. Rosenthal, *HUCA*, 21 (1948), 158f.; on Wāḥb b. Ya'īsh (apparently his Hebrew name was Nathan b. Ḥayyim): Tawḥīdī, *Muqābasāt*, no. 15. Rosenthal was not aware of Abū'l-Khayr's identity, and see also Pines, *PAAJR*, 24 (1955), 103ff.; the topic Ibn Zur'a and David b. Mūsaj was first discussed by Munk, *Guide*, 337, in 1856; after him: by Steinschneider, *Pol. u. apolog. Lit.*, 146ff., about Ibn Zur'a's epistle to Bishr b. Pinḥas. See Ibn al-Hītī, *JQR*, 9 (1896/7), 434; see mention of Ben Maṣḥīah: Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, I, 114f.; in the "epistle of rebuke" of Sahl b. Maṣḥīah, *ibid.*, II, 37, and see also p. 95; David b. Ḥusayn, *ibid.*, 106. See Abraham Ibn Ezra in his preamble to his Bible commentary ("the second way"): "such is the way of the Zadokites like 'Anan and Benjamin (al-Nihāwandī) and Ben (such is the correct reading) Maṣḥīah, and Yeshū'a and all heretics", etc.; cf. Pinsker, *ibid.*, 171; see also Poznanski, *JQR*, 18 (1905/6), 223. Mann, *JQR*, NS 12 (1921/2), 437; Graf, *Or. Christ.* (above in this note) and see also Goldziher, *REJ*, 47 (1902), 42ff.; Goldziher assumed Mūsaj to be a diminutive of Mūsā. See Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit. d. J.*, 37 (no. 25), who assumed that Ibn al-Muqammiṣ and David Ibn Mūsaj were one and the same, a view already denied by Poznanski, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 259. In a fragment of a Karaite polemical tract, BL Or 5554B, f. 34 (presented by Dr. David Sklare at a meeting of the *majlis* group of Tel Aviv University), b, last line, there is praise for Abū'l-Ḥusayn b. al-Maṣḥīah, "the only one who contradicted the 'dissenters'". See also Goitein, *Saadia Anniv. Vol.* (1942), 567, who mainly points out the multitude of Jewish scholars in Raqqa—Judah b. Joseph, Sa'īd b. 'Alī, Wāḥb b. Ya'īsh,

14. *Some eleventh century events*

(241) Caliph al-Muqtadir was assassinated on 31 October 932, and replaced by his brother, al-Qāhir, who was a cruel tyrant. It did not take long for the army to get rid of him, after gouging his eyes out and throwing him into the dungeon, and appointing al-Muqtadir's son, al-Rādī, in 934. By that time the Būyids, a ruling family among the Daylamī tribes of Persia, had already begun advancing westwards, into the heart of the caliphate. About ten years later, at the end of 945, they would be subjugating Baghdad and becoming the rulers of the eastern caliphate until 1055. The important Jewish centers in the area of Fāris, such as Ahwāz and Tustar, were relieved, it would seem, under the Daylamīs; for earlier they were subject to the graces of the Turkish and Persian military commanders and suffered during the incessant wars between them. The actual ruler in that area was Abū ʿAbdallah Aḥmad al-Barīdī, who became chief tax farmer, and who remained in place for a long time, with short breaks, despite the tumultuous period. He, his brother and his sons constituted the focus of military and political power that the Būyids eradicated when they conquered southern Iraq in 947. About Aḥmad al-Barīdī, it was said that he was particularly harsh towards the Jews and abused them, "for they were the majority of merchants", and expropriated considerable property from them.

About al-Rādī it was said that he removed the Jew Ibn Faḍlān (a name that recurs at different times in Baghdad Jewry, implying a family name) from his lofty post (apparently: *jahbadh*); appointing in his place the Christian Ibn Mālik.

In 940, a period of harsh calamities commenced in Iraq that spurred on waves of emigration to other countries. In that year there was severe drought, not that the supplications for rain helped any. To make matters worse, a plague broke out and so many people died that they had to be buried in mass graves without the usual prayers and ritual washing of the body. There was no rain throughout virtually the entire winter, then, at the end, in March and April 941, there was rain. The looting lasted in Baghdad day and night through the autumn of 941, after the men of Abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Barīdī (brother of the above-mentioned Aḥmad) attacked the caliphate palace and killed whomever they found. They expropriated houses and expelled their residents. The cost of living skyrocketed, a *kurr* (about three tons) of wheat was sold for 316 dinars; the protected people were entirely at risk under al-Barīdī; plagues raged and many died; the destitute were forced to eat corpses. A similar situation was reported for 944. According to al-Ṣūlī, a contemporary (died in 946), there was widespread terrible oppression and robbing of the Baghdad merchants; "then a group of wealthy people left Baghdad for Palestine (or Syria), both Jews and Zoroastrians". The same happened in the following two years, 945-946; bread was totally unavailable, corpses were eaten, many people, especially children, were

and, as we saw above, also David b. Marwān al-Muqammiṣ. See also Kraemer, *Humanism*, 77-84, on the position of Jews in the cultural life of Baghdad in the tenth century.

murdered to eat their bodies; people picked grains out of animal dung, or ate roasted cotton seeds, many died and their bodies were eaten by dogs. Many people left Baghdad for Baṣra in the hope of finding dates and many died along the way. The Arabic sources describe the distress and the horrors of those years, 941-946, and repeatedly note the emigration and flight, mainly of the wealthy, and especially of Jews. People sold their property, houses and fields, in order to acquire bread. It appears that the person whose name I assumed was Naḥshōn (grandson of Ṭōv) was alluding to that distress in his letter to Spain of 953, when complaining that Pumbedita had nowhere to look for its "daily bread, for all is desolate" (the areas that had supplied its sustenance), "the land we had been made desolate and lost in those bad years of ours, our money and our land have come to naught".

According to what Ibn al-Athīr recorded, years of distress, and the attendant emigration, also lasted into the second half of the tenth century. In 960 there was drought throughout Iraq, especially around Mosul, and the price of wheat jumped to 1,200 dirhams (it should be assumed: 120 dinars) a *kurr*, and barley to 800 dirhams. Many escaped to Palestine (or Syria) and to other regions of Iraq. Drought again struck in 969; the rulers instituted price control of food, but that only added to the disaster, and the situation improved only after the control was removed. Many then ran away from the districts of Iraq to Mosul and to Palestine (or: Syria) and Khurāsān. Then again there was a mass migration (of most of the Iraqi populace?), because of the drought of 986. There was no security either of body or property, coins were counterfeit, taxes very high, and commerce froze. The soldiers rioted in the towns, mosques were torn down, the *waqf* foundations were looted, and the hospitals neglected.

In May 973, an important official was killed, apparently by Shiites, in the Karkh quarter of Baghdad. Abū'l-Faḍl al-Ḥusayn al-Shīrazī, the vizier of the Būyid rulers, ordered the torching of the area of al-Naḥḥāsīn, and from there to al-Sammākīn (from the copperwares market to the fishmongers market); according to Ibn al-Jawzī, 17,300 shops were burned down along with 320 residential buildings whose rent would bring in 43,000 dinars a month, including 33 mosques. It appears that these serious events in Baghdad were cheek by jowl. In 994, there were severe disturbances by the *ʿayyārūn*, the urban gangs, and there were battles in the Karkh (where the Jews and Shiites lived) until the area of Bāb al-Baṣra. There were huge fires. The rulers then levied large fines on the merchants in the area of the *ṣūq al-tammārīn* (the fruit market). In 995, we learn, there were large expropriations from the holders of deposits, after the death of the vizier, al-Šāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād; 150,000 dinars were then transferred to the palace of the Būyid, Fakhr al-dawla. In 966, the Būyids sought to raise money from Jewish financiers. The vizier, Abū ʿAlī al-Muwaffaq al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad ibn Ismaʿīl, then demanded that Ibn Faḍlān, the Jew, put a loan at the rulers' disposal, and he refused; then the vizier complained to the ruler, Bahā' al-dawla, and it was decided to imprison the Jews and expropriate their money; indeed, when Bahā' al-dawla, the ruler, who was staying in Wāsiṭ arrived in Baghdad, he ordered the imprisonment of an entire group of Jews, who were tortured and money extorted from them. On the other hand, another source, indeed a late one, tells about that same

vizier, Bahā' al-dawla Abū 'Alī al-Muwaffaq, that he would protect the Jews. It appears that it is that wave of expropriations and abuse that Sherira Gaon and his son Hayy meant in their letter to Fustat, when they wrote: "for by the mercy of our Creator He left our souls in our possession". In 1002, according to Hilāl al-Šābi', the city of Baghdad was destroyed, and after the gangs (*al-ʿayyārūn*) ran wild, the fires and robbing, most of the residents ran away to the marsh areas (al-Baṭṭha) in southern Iraq, and some went to 'Ukbarā and al-Anbār. In 1006, severe riots again followed a drought.

This situation of insecurity and riots, led, on the one hand, to waves of emigration that included many Jews. On the other hand, the eastern commerce and the sea shipments gradually shifted to the Indian Ocean, from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. The smart policy of the Fatimids, who knew how to draw the merchant ships to Alexandria and the other ports under their control, also contributed to this process.

Rarely do the Arabic sources give explicit information about the Jews. Yet there are very many descriptions of, and details of the violent internal struggles in Islamic society, especially in Baghdad. The regime's lack of stability after the decline in the status of the Abbasid caliphs, is what undoubtedly led to serious acts of aggression against the protected people, especially the Jews. While the Arabic sources tell, for example, about the distress and severe rioting and the violent struggle between the Sunnis and Shiites, in the winter of 997-998, and also in the following winter, 998-999, Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī writes to the gaon of Sura, Samuel b. Hophni, on 7 August 999, among other things: "I cried about what you wrote of events in the city, may God help you". However, one should note that according to that same letter there were also facets of life in the Jewish community that indicate a certain normalcy in the situation; the writer intends to return to Baghdad (it appears that he did not return, but stayed in the Maghrib); he asks the gaon to assist Abū Maṣṣūr, a relative of his, in his Talmud and Mishnā studies, even though he is already a grown man and had begun caring for his own livelihood; he also sent to that Abū Maṣṣūr a power of attorney regarding the buildings the writer owned in Baghdad.

More evidence of the disorderly state prevailing in Baghdad can be seen in that it was customary to exact illegal protection money for defense: *khafāra*, *ḥimāya* (above, sec. 190), as mentioned by the contemporary writer, Hilāl al-Šābi'.

An echo of the incessant persecutions, robbery, and expropriations in this period is also in the fragment of a letter written by the gaon of Sura, Samuel b. Hophni, at about 1008; he describes a terrible period of hunger and distress in Sura, the result of the impoverishment of Babylonian Jews, and mentions "the great lawbreaking and magnitude of the injustice". It appears that at that time, in the context of the emigration that I mentioned above, Babylonian Jews migrated northwards as well, to the area of the Caspian Sea as also to countries in the east, the context in which also the emigration to India should be seen, and there is a reminiscence of the rights granted in Cochin to someone who apparently was the head of those who settled there, Joseph Rabban, in 1020.

In the wave of restrictions, persecutions, and riots, there was a proximity, and, to a great extent, a common fate between the Jews and

Shiites of Baghdad. Thus, for example, in AH 422, i.e., AD 1031, when rioting erupted between Shiites and Sunnis, on 19 March, Jewish houses were looted because the masses accused them of helping the Shiites. The next day, the rioting continued, and the rioters, now joined by battalions of Turks, set the markets and houses on fire, causing much death and the destruction of many markets. In times of distress, the Baghdadi masses directed their hostility against the protected people, something that induced the government to take steps to assuage their anger. Close to seven years later, on 12 November 1037, it was learned that all the Muslim clerics and notables in Baghdad assembled, invited the catholicos and the exilarch, and presented them with the caliph's order to renew the edicts regarding exhibiting discriminatory signs.

It is no wonder then, that the protracted lack of security and scenes of horror played out before their eyes over such a long period of time, and the distress and numerous expropriations, led Jews to believe the redemption was nigh, the messiah about to appear, and to deal with calculations regarding the end times. Bīrūnī writes that the Jews believed that in the Alexandrine year of 1335, Jerusalem would be built, and the beginning would be 45 years before (calculations such as these are based, as is known, on interpretations of chapter 10 of the Book of Daniel). According to what Bīrūnī himself writes there, Alexander's kingdom, according to Jewish calculations, was in the year AM 3448; i.e., the year 311-312 BC, or the beginning of the "era of writs", the Seleucid calculation. Therefore, 1335 would be AD 1024, and 45 years prior would be—AD 979. We have evidence of similar expectations regarding the years, 960, 968, 970.²⁴¹

²⁴¹ The anti-Jewish incidents in the region of Awhāz and Tustar: Ibn Miskawaih, *Tajārīb*, 257 (under the year 321, i.e. 933); cf. *idem*, the manuscript in Aya Sofia, 408. Ibn Faḍlān: Abū Shujāʿ, 282; Belin, *JA*, 4^e sér., t.17 (1851), 458; see in Busse, *Chalif*, 489f., more examples of anti-Jewish oppression and confiscations. The years 940/941 and after, see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 377, 380f., 391, 416, 533, 601; IX, 51, 204. See al-Ṣūlī, 251; Ibn Tīqtaḡā, 270, 273. Al-Ṣūlī, 279, even knows that some of the Baghdadi criminals were Christians, who were owners of taverns and pimps, organized in a kind of underworld, and the catholicos had a liaison for them; many of them were caught and punished, and a fine of 50,000 dirhams was imposed on the catholicos. See Ḥamza al-Isfahānī, 147, 945f.; Ibn Miskawaih, II, 95; the letter of 953: 13; cf. Ashtor, *AESC*, 27:185, 1972; Levy, *Baghdad Chron.*, 944, has shown that it is this period of depression that was the beginning of the rise to power of the Būyids, the Daylamīs, in the caliphate. See also: Canard, *Arabica*, 9 (1962), 266; Kraemer, *Humanism*, 21. The events of 973: Ibn al-Jawzī, *ʿAjāʾib*, MS Paris 1567, 40a (who mentions the Būyid ruler, Muʿizz al-dawla, in connection with those events, but Muʿizz al-dawla died in 969). Ibn Miskawaih, I, 309; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (MS Paris 5866), 18b: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VII, 60; cf. Busse, *Chalif*, 424; Hilāl al-Ṣābiʿ (Amedroz), 413. The 80's: al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, III, 88; cf. Kraemer, *Humanism*, 26. The events of 994-995: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VII, 174; Abū Shujāʿ (Amedroz), 262, cf. *Eclipse*, VI, for AH 385. Ibn Faḍlān, and the confiscations in 996, see: Abū Shujāʿ, 282 (under AH 386); cf. Busse, *Chalif*, 490. The vizier as defender of the Jews: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīs*, II, 888. The letter of Sherira and Hayy: 30, a, lines 12-13; the influence on trade: Cahen, Buwayhids, in *EF*. See the letter of Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī, 58, a, lines 12, 22ff., 25-b, line 3. Cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 155; Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VII, 202; protection money: Hilāl al-Ṣābiʿ (Amedroz), 364, AH 390 (AD 1000); the letter of Samuel b. Hophni: 53, a; Joseph Rabbān: see the article by Mandelbaum, *JSS*, 1 (1939), 424f., with more references. Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV, 373f., assumed that the rights inscribed in the copper plates are from AD 490. The troubles of 1031: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 55; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 418f.; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 31; the distinguishing badges reintroduced: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 96f. (with the text of the order); Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 43. The calculations of the coming of

15. *Jewish figures in the eleventh century*

(242) We know of a number of figures who flourished at the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century, more or less at the time of Hayy Gaon. The first that should be mentioned was ASAF *rōsh ha-seder* B. BEZALEL, a Baghdadi who met with Elḥanan b. Shemariah when the latter was staying in Baghdad, and to whom Elḥanan showed his proficiency in learning, apparently because he expected an appointment by the gaon. This is mentioned by Exilarch Hezekiah b David, in 1021, when he added to Asaf's name the blessing for the departed, i.e., he died before 1021. Hayy Gaon, himself, mentions him in his letter to Judah *alūf rōsh ha-seder* b. Joseph, of Qayrawān. The fact that the gaon mentions him first after himself, "*rōsh ha-seder* of the yeshiva, before the *alufim* and the elders of the Sanhedrin" etc., is evidence of his important status in the yeshiva. We have no other details about him, except for the fact that he died on the Sabbath eve.

HEZEKIAH B. SAMUEL *rōsh ha-seder*; his father, Samuel, was the grandson of Paltoi b. Abayē; his son, Hezekiah, was thus the great grandson of Paltoi Gaon and as such a maternal relative of Sherira Gaon's. He sent a quire of responsa from the yeshiva to Bahlūl b. Joseph, of Qayrawān; Bahlūl is mentioned in Hayy Gaon's letter of august 1006. It should be assumed that Hezekiah was the son of "Master Samuel *rōsh ha-seder*", whom we find at the head of a preamble to a fragment of a letter ascribed to Sherira Gaon. Louis Ginzberg's view, that Hezekiah lived in Palestine or the Maghrib, not in Babylonia, as well as another of his assumptions that he was "the grandson of Tōv", author of the well-known letter of 953 (see above, secs. 147, 239) is patently wrong.

Mentioned among the Karaite figures in the same period is JACOB B. ASHER B. MANṢŪR, known by the nickname Abū'l-Ṭayyib al-Jabalī. According to Ibn al-Hitī, he was a contemporary of Abū'l-Faraj Hārūn b. Faraj, one of the leaders of the Karaites in Jerusalem, who flourished in the first half of the eleventh century, most of whose works were in the area of grammar, which also appears to have been the field of the aforementioned Samuel b. Asher. Ibn al-Hitī also says about him that he debated with "Menaḥem head of the yeshiva", about whom we have no details except for his mention in the memorial notes and preambles of letters, and it appears that he was the father of Joseph ha-Kohen, and grandfather of Solomon ha-Kohen b. Joseph, the Palestinian gaon in 1025; Menaḥem, in the notes, is referred to as "head of the yeshiva of the Exile", something for which we have no explanation; he may have been one of the Sura geonim in the transitional period before Samuel b. Hophni, but this is still somewhat of a mystery.

the messiah: Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 15-18; cf. Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 44 (1900), 400-416, about the calculations of Saadia Gaon; also: Silver, *Mess. Spec.*, 52, who wrongly decided that Bīrūnī considered the "era of Alexander" to begin in 325 BC, and see Gil, *Blau Jub. Vol.*, 198f.; *idem*, *Hist.*, 498f. and n. 9.

It appears that in this period, the end of the tenth century and beginning of the eleventh, some *payṭānīm* (liturgical poets) flourished in Babylonian and Persian Jewry, but it is difficult to define their locality or time with certainty. For example, the *payṭān*, Solomon the Babylonian, who, despite the name and the nature of his poetry, appears to have actually flourished in one of the countries of Christian Europe, apparently at about the middle of the tenth century. One of the outstanding *payṭānīm* was SOLOMON (SULAYMĀN) AL-SINJĀRĪ, of Sinjār, in the area of Mosul. Schirmann noted that "he was one of the most prolific the Jews ever had in the Exile".

A resident of Jurjān, who taught the great Muslim writer al-Bīrūnī about Judaism, was JACOB B. MOSES (YA'QŪB B. MŪSA) AL-NIQRISĪ. Bīrūnī mentions him, and heard a marvelous story from him, about how Moses raised Joseph's casket from the Nile; first he threw in a piece of paper in the shape of a fish, and when the casket took its time appearing he intended to throw in a piece of paper shaped like a calf, but right away Aaron came over and there was no longer any reason for doing so, nevertheless, he threw it into the river, in this way the Jews received it and because of it made the golden calf; he also mentions Jacob b. Moses in connection with Yom Kippur (YA'qūb al-Yahūdī).

Among the Muslim figures who were keepers of the traditions (*muḥaddithūn*) in that period, were Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUbaydallāh b. Yaḥyā al-Muʿaddib (the teacher) al-Bayyʿ (the merchant) the Jew, i.e., the grandson of a Jew who was a teacher and a merchant. This Abū Muḥammad died in AH 408, i.e., AD 1017/8, at the age of 87; it appears that his father is the one who converted to Islam. Abū Muḥammad lived in *darb al-yahūd*, Jews' Street, in Baghdad.²⁴²

²⁴² Asaf *rōsh ha-seder*: Hayy Gaon's letter, Bodl MS Heb d 47, f. 3, together with TS Loan 2, in Mann, *Texts*, I, 132, 133; see also mention of Asaf b. Bezalel in the preamble to this letter *ibid.*, 116 and in the notes; see also: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 45 (no. 27); see there more references, in the preamble to this letter and in the notes; see also: *idem*, *Hist.*, 578f. and n. 70; cf. Abramson, *Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 (1983/86), 40, where there is mention of Asaf who was *rōsh ha-seder* at the gaon of Sura, Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Hophni, which is probably a misprint, and should be: Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*, who was Joseph ha-Kohen b. Isaac, i.e. a nephew of Samuel b. Hophni, and cousin of Israel. See mention of him in the letters of Israel Gaon: 63, line 4, 65, b, line 9. The date of Asaf b. Bezalel's death is unknown to us, we only know that he died on a Sabbath eve, as is preserved in the memorial list TS 6 K 2, f.2r. Hezekiah b. Samuel *rōsh ha-seder*: see TS Loan 90, fol. 2b, in Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 59; see the fragment ascribed to Sherira Gaon: 35; see Mann, *Texts*, I, 119f., 559; Bahlūl b. Joseph is mentioned in 37, lines 29-30, 37 (a letter of Hayy Gaon); see Harkavy, *Resp.*, 7 where he is one of the writers of queries, probably addressed to Hayy Gaon; see *ibid.*, 345, additional mention of him; cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5(1933/4), 289, 296 n. 181; Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 83; Gil, *Hist.*, 575f. and n. 68. See Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 7 n. 1; II, 54. Ginzberg and others wrongly assumed that it is Hezekiah who had the title *rōsh ha-seder*, not Samuel, his father; and also, that he was a grandson of Paltoi Gaon, though in fact he was his great-grandson; this is also the view of Rosenthal (*Shenāṭōn*, 11-12 [1983/6], 597), following Ginzberg; Ben-Sasson, *Tarbiz*, 56(1986/7), 174f., thought that the "grandson of Ṭōv", the writer of 13, was identical with Hezekiah b. Samuel *rōsh ha-seder*. Samuel b. Asher: Ibn al-Hittī, 435; on Abū'l-Faraj Hārūn, cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 814; and see *ibid.*, 660-662, 671f., on Menahem ha-Kohen *rōsh yeshivā shelgōlā*, and see the memorial list in *idem*, *Palest.*, II, 8f. (no. 4). See the view of Dotan, *Ben Asher*, 58-64, that it is Samuel b. Asher who was the opponent of Saadia Gaon; see more references in Gil, *Hist.*, 182, and n. 59. We saw that according to Ibn al-Hittī, Samuel b. Asher was not a contemporary of Saadia Gaon, but lived at the beginning of the eleventh century; as against this, Dotan shows that he is mentioned in Sahl b. Maṣliah's "epistle of rebuke" (Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 37): "Abū'l-Ṭayyib known as al-Jabalī", i.e. in

16. *Two centuries of persecutions*

(243) I will now survey the information about events where injury was inflicted on the Jews in Baghdad and elsewhere in the eastern caliphate, to the extent that historical evidence has been preserved, and it actually was preserved to a rather great extent, usually with breaks of less than ten years, starting from the middle of the eleventh century. Prominent throughout the entire period are the two main factors that were behind the persecutions and restrictions. The first—the Muslim masses, that were involved in struggles of a religious nature that divided them in an increasingly forceful manner; these struggles were between the Sunni majority, and the sectaries, mainly Shiites. There was incessant ferment, repeated outbreaks, pushing the masses into religious extremism, with religious leaders endeavoring to divert the passion of enmity against the protected people, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. The other factor was the rulers. In their burning desire for wealth and luxuries, they did not refrain from repeated rapaciousness. Yet it should be remembered that alongside the outbursts and expropriations, life proceeded orderly; there were waves of emigration, but most, if not all, of them were towards other Muslim countries (even though an initial penetration into Christian Eastern Europe may also have occurred); certainly, when compared with the abject hatred of the “Christ killers” prevailing in Christian countries, the atmosphere in Baghdad and many other localities where the Iraqi and Persian Jews lived, was much better.

In AH 437, i.e., AD 1045/6, riots broke out between Shiites and Sunnis, eventually both camps deciding jointly to loot the houses of Jews, including burning down their ancient synagogue; this is what the chronicle says.

In 1047, a severe plague raged, especially in northern Iraq, particularly in Mosul; it is reported that only 400 Muslims remained there to attend Friday prayers, while only 120 protected people survived. Ibn al-Athīr adds that there was also a brutal drought and the survivors were forced to eat animal corpses. The price of a potion against the disease rose to as high as half a dinar per *mann* (about a liter), and food was very dear. In AH 441, i.e., 1049/50, the bands (*ʿayyārūn*) took control of western Baghdad (where most Jews lived), the residents were forced to move, buying broken down buildings in other neighborhoods and renovating them. At the same time there was still rioting between the Sunnis and Shiites. It appears that in that period there was another wave of emigration, and a Baghdadi was at the head of the Fustat community: “Abū ʿAlī Ḥasan al-Baghdadī, head of the

the tenth century, which is a reason not to rely on Ibn al-Hittī in this matter. On Solomon the Babylonian, see Fleischer, *Piyyūṭ shelōmō ha-bavli*, on p. 23, on where he flourished, and on p. 34, on his time. Solomon al-Sinjārī: Schirmann, *Shīrīm ḥad.*, 46-48, where he edited a poem (*yōṣēr*) of his to the pericope *wa-yiggash* (beginning Gen. 44:18, “then Judah came near unto him”) and see also Fleischer, *Tarbiz*, 66 (1996/7), 62ff.; Jacob b. Moses: Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 276f.; cf. Landauer, *Gött. gel. Anz.*, 1 (1880), 777ff.; Schreiner, *ZAW*, 6 (1886), 247 n. 5; Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7(1945), 42f. The story about Joseph’s bones is somewhat similar to the story in the *midraš*, see *Mekhiltā de-R. Shimʿōn* (*Meqīṣe nird.* edition, 1955/6), 46 and its parallels. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallah: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 1045.

community", mentioned in a deed regarding a house that was sold on Wednesday, 11 Kislev Sel. 1362 (as it should be), 28 November 1050.

In the march of events affecting the Jews of Babylonia, there was, in March 1055, the invasion lead by the Turkish commander, Abū'l-Hārith al-Muzaffar Arslān al-Basāsīrī, into the area of al-Anbār, i.e., Neharde'a; his soldiers and masses of camp followers in their lust for loot, perpetrated many atrocities, including torching Fallūja, by which apparently Pumbedita is meant (the yeshiva was no longer there). This was when the Turkish Saljūqs ruled Iraq; in that same year the Saljūqs conquered the *sawād* (district) of Baghdad, meaning, apparently, the area of the Rādhāns, on the left bank of the Tigris, looted the entire area, destroyed its homes and expelled its residents. These were still the years of drought and plague, 1055-1057. Despite the calamity, the Saljūq caliph al-Qā'im and the Saljūqī Tughrilbakk, still found the time to renew the discriminatory restrictions and dress code of the protected people. A special inspector, Abū Mansūr ibn Nāṣir al-Sayyārī, was appointed to oversee the protected people to ensure that they wore clothes of the correct color and the segregating mark; yet the Khatūn, i.e., the wife of Tughrilbakk, cancelled this requirement and stopped the inspector from carrying out his work. On 26 August 1057, the riots reached new heights, when the food market was torched including the local synagogue (*al-kanīs*, as it should be), other markets and entire neighborhoods.

In November 1058, following mob pressure, another attempt was made to enforce the protected people's dress code. A mob representative, Ibn Sukra, a Hashimite, appeared before the vizier, Ibn al-Muslima, demanding that the protected people's privileges be revoked; this was reported to the caliph. Tughrilbakk's wife's secretary, the Jew Abū 'Alī Ibn Faḍlān, was asked to stay at home (for fear of the mob), and persuade the Jews of Baghdad to stay indoors, and the same for Christians. This led to chaos in the rulers' offices and a breakdown of the financial system; as a result, the government was forced to relinquish its oppressive plans.²⁴³

²⁴³ The events of 1045/6: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 127: in Shawwāl, i.e. April-May 1046; also: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 54; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 531, only knows about disturbances (*fitna*) between the Sunnis and the Shiites. The drought and the plague in Mosul: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 132; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 541f.; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 59. 1049/50: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 142; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'ah* (MS Paris 1506), 2b. Abū 'Alī Ḥasan al-Baghdādī, see TS 16.79, in Abrahams, *JQR*, 17(1904/5), 428. Ḥasan al-Baghdādī was, in the 40's of the eleventh century, one of the residents in *Dār al-ḥaffār*, a building owned by the *heqdēsh* in Fustat, see Gil, *Documents*, index. Al-Basāsīrī: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 161. As against him, Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 559, claims that he was kind to the people of al-Anbār, "and did not allow any of his men to take even a *raṭl* of bread from the inhabitants without paying"; cf. Busse, *Chalif*, 120, 123. The subduing of the *Sawād*: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 613, and see the somewhat foggy report about robberies perpetrated by the Saljūqs, in Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 166. The drought and plagues: *idem*, 'Ajā'ib (MS Paris 1567), 52b-53a; *Muntazam*, VIII, 170, 173; the discriminating badge: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 69. A supervisor on the dress of the protected people: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 171; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 69; August 1057: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 181 (which has: *kabsh*, instead of *kanīs*, and see also al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rīkh*, I, 114: *shārf* (street of) *al-kabsh*, and cf. Lassner, *Topogr.*, 103; apparently the correct reading is in Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 71: *al-kanīs*; November 1058: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 190f. Fiey, *Chrétiens* (1980), 200f.

(244) We hear again of riots by extreme Muslims in Baghdad, in AH 464, beginning that year on 29 September 1071. The mob and its representatives demanded, among other things, that the caliph: close the pubs; punish men and women who behaved in an immoral fashion, and punish the wine merchants; they also wanted dirhams with religious captions to be minted. There was a clear element of animosity towards the protected people, Jews and Christians, in these demonstrations and demands.

In AH 472 (beginning 4 July 1079) we hear about the murder of a Jewish tax farmer, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Ibn ʿAllān, in Baṣra; he was drowned by order of the sultan Malikshāh. It was said of him that he was a very wealthy man, and also enjoyed the sympathy of the residents. When his wife died, all the townsfolk, except for the *qāḍī*, followed her bier. After the murder, the sultan expropriated 100,000 dinars of the Jew's money. Ibn ʿAllān was a peer of the vizier Nizām al-Mulk, and the vizier mourned him for three days. Ibn ʿAllān was at first in charge of the financial affairs of Caliph al-Muqtadī, leased all of his lands from Wāsiṭ to Ṣarṣar, from AH 453, i.e., 1061, and entered into an obligation to pay an annual sum of 86,000 dinars and supply 17,000 *kurr* of grains.

Harsh rioting broke out in Baghdad because of a controversy between the Ḥanbalīs, who were the majority, and the Shāfiʿīs, in AH 473, AD 1080/1. The riots were violent. One of the main issues in the controversy was the expected conversion to Islam of a number of Jews and Christians; their decision to convert to Islam was due to the great influence of Abū Naṣr ʿAbd al-Rahīm b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī al-Naysābūrī, whose sermons they had heard. This al-Qushayrī was among those who accepted the views of al-Ashʿarī (Al-Ashʿarī, a Baṣrian, was at first a *muʿtazilī*, then went over to orthodox Islam, but the character and the style of his arguments were according to the *muʿtazilī* custom; he died in 963). In religious law, al-Qushayrī was a follower of al-Shāfiʿī. His personality aroused great opposition among the Ḥanbalīs. The Baghdad mob, under Ḥanbali influence, was against accepting those Jews and Christians into Islam, arguing that their conversion was only superficial and not true. According to what apparently was a regular custom in Baghdad, the neophytes were to sit astride horses and paraded around the city. The Ḥanbalīs threw stones at a Jewish convert to Islam during such a rideabout, hurling stones from the roof of a mosque; in the ensuing riot a Shāfiʿī was killed.

In July 1085, the state council began receiving complaints, issuing from Caliph al-Muqtadī, about the Jews; details of the complaints have not been preserved, in general they were of an arrogant nature with the threat of abrogating the protection granted to the Jews if they did not respect the conditions of the protected people. The complaints were repeated in March 1088, now, however, they were made specifically against Jewish communities on the Khurāsān road and in Hilla ("land of the Mazyadis"), who did not wear the discriminatory signs, would generally sport a Turkish-like pompadour and called themselves by Muslim *kunyas*; clerics were then dispatched to these places, the area around Baghdad, and also Hilla, to restore order.

In 1091, the recurring problem of discriminatory signs for Jews and Christians rose again. On instructions of the vizier, Abū Shujā^c, an order from Caliph al-Muqtadī was issued on 7 April requiring the protected people to wear the colored distinguishing signs, girdles, and a lead coin stamped with the word *dhimmī*, around their necks, and the same for women when entering the bath house; in addition, they were required to wear black shoes and a black robe, (or wear) a red shoe and anklets on their feet. Because of this order, Abū Sa'd b. al-Mawṣilāyā, the vizier's scribe, and his nephew, Abū Naṣr Hibat Allah (apparently Christians) converted to Islam in the caliph's presence.

Evidence of these decrees is in the *Scroll of Obadiah the Proselyte*:

The king of ʿAdīna (i.e., Baghdad), by the name of al-Muqtadī (empowered) his deputy, by the name of Abū Shujā^c, to change the status (?) of the Hebrews living in ʿAdīna. Many times he sought to destroy them.... he enforced the bearing of colored (?) signs on the head of every Jew, one on the head and the other on the neck, a lead piece the weight of a silver coin to dangle from the neck of every Jew, and in the lead it was written *dhimmī*, as the Jews had to pay tax, and he made every Jew to wear a girdle, and the Jewish women to wear two signs: the sandals of each woman, one to be red and the other black, and on their necks, or on their sandals, a small copper bell to signal their presence so that it would be possible to distinguish between Hebrew women and gentile women....

Also stated therein is that "cruel gentile men" kept an eye on the Jews and "over the Jewish women, cruel women", and they were mocked, etc. As to the tax: "four-and-a-half *darkemōnīm* (dinars) from the wealthy, the middle class two-and-a-half, and the poor, one-and-a-half". The dead could only be buried after their tax had been paid.

At that same exact time, as it transpires, there was a difficult controversy between the caliph and his vizier, Abū Shujā^c, and the sultan of the Turcomans and his vizier, Nizām al-Mulk. The controversy erupted over a slap in the face that the Jew Abū Sa'd b. Simḥa received from a rug merchant, a slap that caused his cap to fly off his head. Blame was laid on Abū Shujā^c, the caliph's vizier, and at the Turcomans' demand he was fired from his post. The Muslim masses of Baghdad noisily proclaimed their support of the vizier, and it led to his being placed under house arrest. Among the decisions of Abū Shujā^c, while vizier, there is an order to the supervisor of the markets (the *muḥtasib*), to punish everyone who acts as the Jews do by opening his shop on Friday and keeping it closed on Saturday.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ AH 464: Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl*, 24. The murder of Ibn ʿAllān: Ibn Miskawaih, 186; Ibn Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VIII, 323 (his version: he confiscated 400,000 dinars). Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 116; the initiators of the murder were the *shihna* (the police chief), a Baghdadī Turcoman, Sa'd al-dawla Jawhar A'in, and Najm al-dawla Khumārtakīn al-Sharābī, governor of Fāris and Khūzistān; they were the enemies of Nizām al-Mulk; cf. Bosworth, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 74. See also Zayyāt, *Mashriq*, 36 (1938), 158, who cites the story from al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab*, from a Leiden manuscript (he also says the confiscated sum was 400,000 dinars). Lessee of the Caliph's estates: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VIII, 222; *idem*, *ʿAjā'ib* (MS Paris 1567), fol. 54b. The report on the conversion to Islam and the riots: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh* (MS Paris 1506), fol. 168a-b. See the articles "al-Ash'arī" (by W.M. Watt) and al-Kūshairī (by H. Halm) in *EL*² and see on al-Qushayrī also al-Fārisī, *al-Siyāq*, 93b-94a; Bulliet, *Patricians*, 155; complaints against the Jews: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*,

(245) The general impression is that the Turcomans (generally known as the Saljūqs) were easier on the protected people and disliked the extremists, mainly the Ḥanbalis, who, as we have seen, would foment riots in Baghdad in order to press the government into carrying out the discriminatory laws against the Jews and Christians. A passage in Ibn al-Jawzī tells that in AH 498 (AD 1104/5), he totally cancelled the discriminatory signs required of the *dhimmīs* according to the AH 480 (AD 1087/8) edicts; he adds: "but the reason for the cancellation is not known". As we have seen, the 1088 edicts mainly affected communities outside of Baghdad, but there are no details about this cancellation, nor where it was applied; but three years later, in 501, i.e., 1107/8, the sultan let the caliph reinstate the vizier, Majd al-dīn Hibat Allah b. Muḥammad, to his post, on condition that he not employ anyone of the protected people. For that year, in July 1108, there is information about a great conflagration in a Jewish neighborhood near a ruin named Ibn Jarada, in the eastern section of the city (i.e., east of the Tigris). All the Jews of Baghdad were then on the western side, as they used to go there every Sabbath, and did not leave until the Sabbath was over. When they returned they discovered that their houses had been burned down. The reason for the onset of the fire: a maidservant and her lover stole property from one of the houses, and set it alight as they were leaving. In that fire property valued at more than 300,000 dinars was destroyed. People saved their lives only by breaking through the walls of the neighborhood. That same neighborhood had already been burned down in 493 (1100), the residents later returning to rebuild it, and now it burned down again.

Another fire, in AH 510, i.e., AD 1116/17, broke out along the Tigris grassland, burning down houses and synagogues (*kanā'is*, perhaps implying churches as well).

The dress regulations were renewed in 515, i.e., 1121/2, but then an agreement was reached whereby the authorities would disregard the discriminatory signs requirement in lieu of a 20,000 dinars payment by the protected people to the sultan, and 4,000 to the caliph. The *jālūt* (i.e., exilarch) appeared before the rulers and gave a guarantee, then raised the money. However, the following year, 1122/3, the edicts against the people of the Karkh, the quarter of the Jews and the Shiites, were renewed, implied is that it was regarding Jews: they were forbidden from entering the baths together with Muslims.

Ten years after paying these enormous sums, the sultan and the caliph reinstated, in June 1131, the validity of the protected people's dress code. Four years later, in 1136, "the Jewish and Christian scribes were banished from the *diwān* and the *makhzan* (the lands tax office), but in the same month they were reinstated". In 1145, at the initiative of the Saljūqi Fakhr

IX, 14, 38. 1091: *idem*, *Shudhūr* (MS Cambridge Or 1476[7]), fol. 59b; *idem*, *Muntazam*, IX, 55; the event of Abū Sa'd Ibn Simḥa and the dismissal of Abū-Shujā': Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 186, and he also writes about Ibn Simḥa in vol. IX, 634. See also: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh* (MS Leiden 88), 12b; (MS Bodl Marsh 658), 12b. According to him: Jewish women had to wear one black sandal and one red sandal. Obadiah the Proselyte: Golb, in Goitein *Jub. Vol.*, 99; the shops: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh* (MS Paris 1506), fol. 224a. See more on the decrees under al-Muqtadī: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 68; cf. on the events of 1091: Levy, *Baghdad Chron.*, 202f.; Lambton, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 275.

al-dīn Abū'l-Muẓaffar ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ṭaghāyarak, who was given the position of the sultan's *ḥājib* (kind of a vizier), the dress code pertaining to the Jews was again reinstated. At the time there was a plot to expel the Jews from Baghdad, but after the caliph's intervention they were allowed to stay in the city, even though the caliph's people complained that there were too many Jews there, and that they caused crowding in the baths; but then the aforementioned Fakhr al-dīn said: "whoever doesn't like it, can go somewhere else". Most of the information regards the restrictions in Baghdad; but a similar situation prevailed in all other areas of the caliphate, even though the degree of severity was different, depending on local circumstances.²⁴⁵

17. *Fifty years of messianism*

(246) Four double pages in the Geniza contain the story of edicts against the Jews of Baghdad and the manner in which they survived. The event took place during the time of "an evil man" by the name of "Ibn Abī Shujāʿ", this is the wording of the story. As we have seen, the father, Abū Shujāʿ, had also been a vizier. We know that the son replaced his father the vizier in 1089, when the latter was on a pilgrimage to Mecca. In 1113/4, Rabīb al-dawla was appointed the vizier of Caliph al-Mustazhir; Rabīb al-dawla died six years later, in I Rabīʿ 513, that began on 12 June 1119. The beginning of the events described in the above Geniza fragments was therefore before this date. The main point of the edicts was the demand that the Jews of Baghdad pay 1,000 dinars; besides, they were required to wear the yellow patch. The persecutions lasted a few years, then, the Geniza story tells us, a Jewish girl, the daughter of Joseph, the son of the physician (*ben ha-rōfē*), began proclaiming the redemption according to the instructions of Elijah the Prophet. The events began on 21 August 1120, i.e., a year after the death of the vizier, the aforementioned Ibn Abī Shujāʿ. At this point the part that apparently describes the girl's preaching and the Jews' response is missing, but it is implied that the Jews of Baghdad then stopped paying the tax. Then the caliph (al-Mustashid who entered into office on 6 August 1118, upon the death of al-Mustazhir) decided to assemble the Jews at the *dār al-ḍarb* (the mint) in Baghdad, and force them to convert to Islam. He so informed the *qāḍī* al-Dāmghānī, in writing, who however opposed this move. Here, again, a part of the manuscript is missing. The end of the story describes the affairs of a Jew named Abū Sahl Ibn Kammūna (the Ibn Kammūna family was apparently among the most important Jews in Baghdad, we will meet them again in a later period). Ibn Kammūna was imprisoned and about to be executed (as is implied), but he

²⁴⁵ Abolishment of the discriminatory badges: Ibn Jawzī, *Shudhūr*, fol.61a; *idem*, *Muntazam*, IX, 143; Majd al-dīn: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 454, cf. Levy, *Baghdad Chron.*, 202f. The fire: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 455; Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, IX, 157 (who does not say that it all was about Jews). The fire in 1116/7: Ibn Jawzī, *Shudhūr*, fol.62a. The payment to the sultan and to the caliph: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, IX, 228, Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 595; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 287, 588 n. 51. The decree about the bath-houses: Sibī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āḥ* (MS Paris 1506), fol. 306a. 1131: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, X, 20. 1136: Ibn Jawzī, *ibid.*, 78; 1145: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīṣ*, III, 206.

survived and went to the house of the exilarch (then Daniel b. Hisdai, about whom I shall be writing further down); the exilarch was then fasting and praying with all of his students, standing on ashes and asking for deliverance. When Ibn Kammūna arrived the exilarch thanked God for his deliverance; meanwhile word of the girl reached the caliph's ears and he wanted to know about her dream; when Ibn Kammūna related the gist of her dream, the caliph mocked the dream and the Jews who believe in a girl's dream, and said that he was thinking of condemning her to the flames and killing the Jews; however, then Elijah the Prophet came to him (as implied, in a dream); here again there a part is missing, but the matter is self-explanatory; in the end the Jews were saved, there was even an order issued by the caliph to release them from the poll tax; nevertheless, the Jews were so apprehensive that they raised the money, a dinar from every household, to pay the Muslim notables as bribes.

This is apparently an echo of the monetary demand of 1121/2 mentioned in the Arabic chronicles, as stated above (previous section), where we also see mention of the exilarch; however, those chronicles refer to a sum a number of times greater than those 1,000 dinar in the Geniza manuscript, and it appears that the chroniclers had been greatly exaggerating. It appears that the 'messianic' tension in the story was only marginal, perhaps even unlikely, and it is actually a description of a miraculous cancellation of the edicts through the intervention of Elijah the Prophet. A similar story has indeed been preserved regarding Neṭīrā (below, sec. 363), i.e., about two centuries before, the parallel figure here being Ibn Kammūna; the story of Neṭīrā also concerned the Jews' fears of the cancellation of the poll tax, which gave them life security. As to the *qāḍī* al-Dāmghānī, he was a real-life figure, scion of a family of clerics and legal scholars; it appears that the reference is to Abū'l-Hasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Dāmghānī, the *qāḍī* 'l-*quḍāh* (chief *qāḍī*) who died in 1120/1. Al-Dhahabī mentions and praises his lofty traits, *diyāna ṣāhira*, extreme fear of heaven. Worthy of mention is that the Dāmghānī family, which gave rise to generations of *qāḍīs*, belonged to the more rationalist *madhhab* (legal school) of Abū Ḥanīfa.²⁴⁶

(247) Some years after the restrictions and persecutions at the time of Caliph al-Muqtadī, there was a messianic movement whose details are in the *Scroll of Obadiah the Proselyte*. We have seen that it also contains parallel details about the persecutions, similar to what we find in those chronicles. All this tends to cast a question mark over the accepted view, that Obadiah himself wrote the scroll, for he was a contemporary of the time of the events, while those chronicles were written much later, one-hundred or so years later. Obadiah (or the person who wrote his story) describes a messianic movement that took place "in the days of the high official whose name was al-Afḍal", meaning the vizier of Egypt, al-Afḍal, who was appointed to his post in March 1094. In Obadiah's eyes this was a false

²⁴⁶ See 87 and the preamble to this document. Ibn Abī Shujā': Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, IX, 175; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 168, 498, 551, 560; cf. Goitein, *JQR*, NS 43 (1952/3), 61ff.; Goitein mentions Abū 'Abdallah Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Dāmghānī, father of 'Alī, who was *qāḍī* 'l-*quḍāh* as well, and died in AH 478, 1085/6, i.e. slightly more than 35 years before the events discussed here. See also Ibn Jawzī, *ibid.*, 12f., 22ff., 197; *idem*, *Shudhūr*, 62b. Dhahabī, *Ibar*, IV, 30, 204; see on more sons of this family: Ibn Jawzī, *ibid.*, X, 117; al-Qurashī, I, 82, 373; Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīṣ*, IV, 776 (no. 1130).

messianism concocted by "immoral people among the Jews; they sought to formulate an aspiration, but failed". The movement occurred in the "mountains of Ashūr (=Assyria)", i.e., the area of Mosul, in northern Iraq, "in the land of Hakhriya", which is none other than Hakkāriyya, the name of a city and rural area where the Kurdish Hakkārī tribe lived; the area spread south and east of the Van lake.

The name of the person who was believed to be the messiah was: Solomon b. Rūgī, who had a son by the name of Menahem. His chief assistant was a man originating from a Jerusalem family, by the name of °Azariah the Jerusalemite, and whose nickname was: b. Faḍlūn. The adherents of this messianic movement carried on a widespread propaganda, all the Jewish diasporas learned of it, and many communities were wont to fast and pray, yet nothing happened, and the Jews were mocked by the "gentiles and uncircumcised", i.e., the Muslims and the Christians; they heard about the Jews' desire to "fly to their country"; furthermore, both Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn al-Athīr write that in AH 487, April-May 1094, one of the Jews dreamt that they were about to fly (meaning: to Palestine) and informed all the Jews, who dissipated their property and treasures (among others) and awaited that flight, but in the end they were a mockery among the nations. This matter is linked to affairs in Iraq, and Obadiah describes it together with a description of the 1094 restrictions, and it appears that his story and the descriptions of the Arabic sources derive from a common source. As for the flight motif, it recurs in the Arabic sources, also regarding earlier periods, and there is in it much of typology and very little truth, and was ascribed not only to the Jews (above, sec. 157).

It should be noted that also the matter of the persecutions at the time of al-Muqtadī, and the matter of Solomon b. Rūgī belong to the time before Obadiah's conversion, which took place in 1102; the two draw, as noted, from a literary source. We do not know what happened in the end to Solomon b. Rūgī. The sources do not say anything about his fate; as we shall see below, the messianic ferment regarding this figure continued, perhaps into the 1140s, and afterwards around his son Menahem. Below I will discuss the possible identification of Menahem b. Solomon with David al-Rō'ī. Before then, it should be mentioned that according to Obadiah, at the very same time there was another messianic focus, in Ba'qūba (as it should be read), which is Bē °Uqbā, north of Baghdad ("there is one day distance between it and the city °Adīna"). The leader of this movement was a man by the name of Ben Shaddād (Obadiah: "known as Ben Shaddād"). The leader and the members of his faction were apprehended and thrown into jail, by order of the sultan, or of the caliph ("king of °Adīna"); we have no information regarding their fate, for here the manuscript is torn.

Obadiah returns to the messianic issue also in regards to a period about 35 years later, when the events that I described above (in the previous section) took place, in Baghdad, at around 1120. He then finds another focus of messianism in Bāniyās ('Dan') in Palestine; this one has to do with Karaites. Obadiah's meeting with the leader of the group, "a *kohen* from among the Karaite Jews by the name of Solomon", takes place in the month of Elul, "nineteen years after I entered the covenant of the God of Israel"; Obadiah converted in 1102, i.e., this had occurred in August or September of 1121; Solomon ha-Kohen was anticipating the redemption—God "will

gather his people Israel from all the lands to Jerusalem the holy city"—within two-and-a-half months. This Solomon eats neither meat or bread, only fruit, and only drinks milk; a conversation takes place between him and Obadiah, who argues that the redemption will only come about through a person of the Davidic line, not by a *kohen* or a levite; Solomon's answer is missing in the manuscript, but it seems that in the end Obadiah believed him.²⁴⁷

(248) Obadiah the Proselyte's story dovetails with that of Benjamin of Tudela. Clearly, Benjamin of Tudela had an informant who was well-versed, in the context of the time, with the political and military circumstances and events, and knew the details of the messianic movement that he described, and who may even have been one of its adherents, no wonder there is no negative word in Benjamin regarding the 'messiah', i.e., David al-Rō'ī, or any reservations about him. The issue in Benjamin is in the general framework of the *hochpolitik* of what was happening in Babylonia, Persia and Media. In the east, the supreme ruler was Sanjār, "shāh son of the shāh, ruling over Persia over the forty-five kings under him", he is the sultan; of the borders of his kingdom Benjamin mentions the Samra river, Samarqand, the Gozan river, the cities of Media, the "Haftōn Mountains" (=the mountains of Kurdistan?), the "cities of Tōvōt", Rūdhbār (where "there are about 20,000 Jews, but in deep exile"), the Vant river (Van? "Where there are about 4,000 Jews"), the "land of Mūlhāt" ("a nation that does not believe in the Ishmaelite [=Muslim] religion.... they are subjects of the Old Man in the country of the *hashishin* [=Assassins].... where there are four Jewish communities that go out with them to war and they are not subject to the king of Persia.... and they are under the rule of the exilarch from Babylonia"); he also mentions 'Umariyya ("where there are about 25,000 Jews"; this place is the focus of our following discussion); and Gilān. The Jews pay a poll tax of one gold piece (dinar) *amīrī*, which is a dinar-and-a-quarter *murābiḡ*.

Here we reach the essence: "a man rose there ten years ago, by the name of DAVID AL-RŌ'Ī of the city of 'Umariyya" (as it should be read). He was a well-versed, learned person, "also in the Torah and *halākhā* and Talmud", as well as "in all of the Ishmaelite wisdom and the 'external books', in the books of the charmers and magicians". He was the student of Hisdai, the exilarch (father of Daniel; below sec. 254) and of the "head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* in the city of Baghdad", apparently the gaon 'Alī (or Eli), father of Samuel (below, sec. 261). Furthermore, the anonymous informant told Benjamin about two powerful factors then threatening all the areas of

²⁴⁷ See the edition of the scroll, inclusive of all its fragments as identified in the Geniza by previous students, as well as a detailed discussion of its various historical elements, in Golb, *Goitein Jub. Vol.*, 17ff., and see *ibid.* 80, the view that the scroll is "actually in his own handwriting". See the discussions about this messianic movement in Mann, *REJ*, 71(1920), 89ff.; *idem*, *Hatequfa*, 24(1927/8), 335ff.; also *REJ*, 89(1930), 245ff.; on the flight: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, IX, 83; Hakkariyya, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 978; the article Hakkārī, in *El*². That area was under the control of the Turcomans (al-Ghuzz), already in 1040, when the Ghuzz left the Urmiya zone and descended to the neighborhood of Mosul, after having subdued the Kurds, who suffered many losses, see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 384f. In 1122, it says there, the *amīr* of the Turcomans, Juyūsh Bakk, ruler of the Hakkariyya region who harshly oppressed the Kurds, died. See on Bāniyās: Golb., *ibid.*, 102f.; cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 214f., and note 94.

the Abbasid-Turcomanic kingdom; one was Mülhāt, or Alamūt, the center of the extreme Ismaʿīlīs where “the Old Man in the country of the Ḥashishīn” ruled, where there were “four Jewish communities that go out with them to war”. The *ḥashishīn* (Assassins) had been ruling the area since about 80 years, from 1090, from the time of Ḥasan-i al-Ṣabbāḥ, the Old Man from the mountain. The other factor was “the Ghuzz, the Turkish unbelievers” (*benē ghūṣ min kufr al-turk*), tribes of Huns who gave Sanjār, the area’s ruler, resounding defeats in 1141 and 1154. These Ghuzz “loved the Jews dearly”, and the Jews in Persia say to the “king of Persia” (certainly Sanjār) that the “unbelievers, the people of Ghuzz, the Turkish unbelievers.... are our allies”. Thus Benjamin is describing a messianic movement that had been existing for about two generations in the region of Mosul with a strong influence over the Jewish communities in Iraq, Persia and Syria. Details are hazy, but essentially, Benjamin tells the story of a Jewish revolt in the Kurdistan mountains (“Ḥaftōn Mountains”), led by a leader, who they believed was the messiah. He met with the “king of Persia”, presenting himself as “king of the Jews”. The “king of Persia”, the sultan, ordered him thrown into the prison for those serving life sentences, “in the city of DBRZT’N” (impossible to identify it); while the sultan was discussing the Jewish revolt with his council, David al-Rō’ī appeared, after succeeding in escaping from prison, and even turned himself into someone who sees but is not seen by others, and also passed over the river on his scarf; in a miraculous journey (*qefīṣat ha-derekh*) he reached ʿUmariyya, by using the Tetragrammaton. The sultan then turned to the caliph in Baghdad and they pressed the exilarch and the head of the yeshiva to stop David’s activities, otherwise the Jews “in my entire kingdom” will be killed. They appealed to David, and also involved “Zakkai the *nāsī* of the land of Ashūr” (i.e., Mosul); and R. Joseph Burhān al-Falak (“sign of heaven”) the ‘visionary’ (=the astrologer) also intervened, but to no avail. The “king of Tugarm” Zayn al-dīn, then offered a 10,000 dinar bribe to David’s father-in-law, and he killed David in his sleep. Then the Jews mollified the “king of Persia” with “100 *kikars* (‘talents’) of gold”.

There is more evidence, that of a man whom, like Benjamin of Tudela’s informant, I find suspicious because of his detailed knowledge, who was previously an adherent of the ‘messiah’. This is none other than the apostate Samawāl Ibn ʿAbbās, author of the book *ifhām al-yahūd* (silencing the Jews); it relates the story of a young Jew by the name of Menaḥem b. Solomon (Munāḥīm b. Sulaymān), also known by his nickname, Ibn al-Rūhī, a man of handsome appearance. He was more learned than the other local Jews, those of ʿUmariyya, near Mosul (we have seen that Benjamin also noted the man’s education, and mentioned ʿUmariyya, where according to him there was a Jewish community of 25,000). The man in charge of the ʿUmariyya fortress took a liking to him; but when the official was absent, Menaḥem conspired to take over the fortress and hole up there; therefore, he wrote to the Jews of Adharbayjān and vicinity who tended to believe him, Samawāl says, since the Jews in the Persian areas were more ignorant than all the other Jews. Samawāl boasted that he saw some of Menaḥem’s letters with the request to fool the Jews and attract them to him, with his own eyes; Menaḥem had even instructed that each one bring a sword hidden under his clothes. In that way many Jews bearing arms

gathered with him, the governor of the fortress suspecting nothing, until he saw what they were up to; but he only killed Menaḥem, and the rest of the Jews dispersed after having suffered and having become impoverished. The Jews believed that Menaḥem was the messiah; even in Baghdad, two swindlers distributed letters claiming that he would arrange for all of them to fly to Jerusalem (*bayt al-maqdis*) at night; they turned their money and jewels over to those crooks, dressed in green clothing and assembled on the rooftops in preparation for their flight. That year was known as “the year of the flight” (regarding the flight belief, see above, secs. 152, 157, 247).

It is easy to see that Samawāl’s version has details similar to those of Benjamin of Tudela. An educated man claiming to be the messiah; the area of the movement: ʿUmariyya; the clash with the government. Yet there are also differences: MENAḤEM B. SOLOMON IBN AL-RÜḤĪ in Samawāl’s account, as opposed to DAVID AL-RÖ’Ī, in Benjamin’s; the letters to the communities and the assembling of Jews bearing arms, not mentioned by Benjamin, but they link to his descriptions regarding the powerful factors cooperating with the Jews: the Huns and the Assassins. The fortress commander is the one who kills Menaḥem, while in Benjamin it is Zayn al-dīn, “king of the Tugarmites” who bribes David’s father-in-law, who then proceeds to kill his son-in-law. The matter of the flight, that we have already encountered above in (sec. 247) Obadiah’s story, is not in Benjamin’s account, but only in that of Samawāl. The exilarch, the head of the yeshiva, Zakkai the *nāsī* (i.e., a member of the exilarchic family) who was in Mosul, Joseph Burhān al-Falak, all three of whom were involved in pressuring “the messiah” (and by so doing certainly expressed the will of the majority) are not mentioned by Samawāl, neither are the miraculous deeds performed by “the messiah”. Samawāl does not mention when the event took place, while Benjamin says: “ten years ago”. Samawāl adds an interesting and characteristic detail, not found in Benjamin, which is that the Jews of that area, at the time of Samawāl, still believed Menaḥem to be the messiah; the whole purpose of his story is to show how perverse Jewish beliefs were.

A subject that preoccupied researchers was the personality of the sultan mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, Zayn al-dīn. From the time of Loeb (1888), the tendency was to improve Benjamin’s version and read Sayf al-dīn, rather than Zayn al-dīn, intending Sayf al-dīn Zangī, the Turcoman commander who subjugated large areas of Iraq and Syria. Yet Zayn al-dīn (“adornment of the faith”) cannot be a corruption, because it was an accepted and widespread nickname in the twelfth century; and Benjamin mentions Sayf al-dīn separately (the above mentioned Joseph “sign of heaven” was an astrologer in his service); there is no doubt that the intention is indeed to Zayn al-dīn, who was Zangī’s right-hand man and who later cared for his sons, Nūr al-dīn and Sayf al-dīn, and was their trusted man; this is the Kurd Zayn al-dīn ʿAlī-Kūjak b. Buktakīn. In 1144/5, he was appointed governor of the Mosul fortress; from 1161 he is mentioned with the title of *ṣāḥib al-jaysh* (head, or commander, of the army) in Mosul, and participated in the battles against the Crusaders in northern Syria; he was the actual ruler of “the land of Hakkāriyya”, including ʿUmariyya. Towards the end of his life he abandoned his areas of control, with the exception of Irbil; he died in AH 563, i.e., AD 1168.

In light of what has been said here regarding the personality and time of Zayn al-dīn, it appears that the end of Menaḥem b. Solomon could have occurred at any time between about 1160, and 1167, i.e., from the time that Zayn al-dīn became the army commander of that area and the actual ruler of northern Iraq and large parts of Syria, until a short time before his death, when the area of his control was greatly curtailed.

Now we must deal with the identity of that 'messiah'. Above (sec. 247), we have seen the information ascribed to Obadiah the Proselyte regarding Solomon b. Rūgī and his movement, who were active in the area of Mosul towards the end of the eleventh century, and it appears that this movement continued flourishing decades later. There is virtually no doubt that Menaḥem claimed messiahship in that area, and this was the same Menaḥem, son of Solomon, referred to by Obadiah the Proselyte. Some students sought to explain that Benjamin had called him David because of the stress on his messiahship, a recollection of King David, yet it is well known that the name Menaḥem (=comforter) also has a messianic charge. The explanation appears to lay in the custom of referring to someone named Sulaymān (Solomon), as Abū Da'ūd; thus it appears that the 'messiah' was none other than Menaḥem, son of Solomon b. al-Rūgī, i.e., Ibn Abī Da'ūd Sulaymān b. al-Rūgī. The name Ibn Abī Da'ūd b. al-Rūgī evolved in Benjamin's account (or that of his copiers) into David al-Rō'ī. In Samawāl's book al-Rūgī became al-Rūhī, and clearly one should prefer the Hebrew script in "the Scroll of Obadiah the Proselyte", while in Samawāl's Arabic script, al-Rūgī became al-Rūhī because of the similarity between the *jīm* and the *ḥā'*. Thus we have details, though vague, about a messianic movement that lasted for two generations, centered in Mosul, that had a significant influence on the Jewish communities, the movement engendered by Solomon b. Rūgī and his son Menaḥem. As to David al-Rō'ī, such a person never existed. If we put together Obadiah's account and that of Benjamin of Tudela, we get an idea of the scope of the movement and the concern it aroused among the rulers as also among the Jewish leaders; we have noted that from Benjamin's account there is an indication that the movement's leader did indeed have thoughts about a general revolt against the regime, in cooperation with the Isma'īlīs, the Assassins and the tribes of the Huns.

Petahiah of Regensburg, who visited Babylonia a few years after Benjamin of Tudela, still found people in Mosul who were preoccupied by messianism. After Benjamin found Joseph Burhān al-Falak there, Petahiah finds "a stargazer by the name of R. Solomon", with an unparalleled knowledge of the stars in "Nineveh (i.e., Mosul) and the whole land of Ashūr"; Petahiah asks Solomon: "when will the messiah come?"; and the fragmented answer was: "I have already seen it a number of times in the stars"; we shall never know what he saw, for R. Judah he-Hasīd, who recorded the description of the journey as dictated by Petahiah, "did not want to write it down lest he be suspected of believing in what R. Solomon was saying". Below (secs. 269-271) I will be dealing with three personalities who apparently took part in the messianic movement of Solomon b. Rūgī and his son Menaḥem, namely Abū'l-Barakāt (Bārūkh)

Ibn Malkā (Melekh), Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Samawāl (Samuel) Ibn ʿAbbās.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ See Benjamin of Tudela, 49f.; the Samra River, probably: Samūr, which flows into the Caspian Sea, south of Darband. See Le Strange, *Lands*, 180; the Gozan River is apparently the River Balkh, i.e. the Oxus, the Amu Darya. See Saadia Gaon's translation to Is. 36:12, where Gozan is Balkh. 'Tōvōt' is sometimes explained as Tibet, Rūdbār (Rudhār) was the main city of the Daylamis' area (which included Gilān, Tabaristān, Jurjān, Qūmis), and is today unidentified; see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 173. Gilan is the region of Gilān, *ibid.*, 172f. The version 'mryh (also: 'm'ryh), in Benjamin is the correct one, not 'm'dyh. The reading 'Umariyya (= *al-jazīra al-'umariyya*) is found at the beginning of the *dīwān* of Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra (the Silvera MS, see the Schmelzer edition), and see the editor's Introduction, 5, and the first two photocopies. Al-Jazīra al-'Umariyya, in that manuscript, is none other than Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar, on the upper Tigris, some 150 km. north of Mosul. See Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 79; Le Strange, *ibid.*, 93f. See Benjamin of Tudela, 33, who mentions the place by its usual name, and it appears that he drew from two different sources, without being aware of the identification of 'Umariyya, the place of the 'messiah', as Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar; he says that there is a distance from Nisibis of "two days to Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar, which is inside the Tigris River"; and whereas he notes that there are 25,000 Jews in 'Umariyya, he finds only 4,000 in Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar, "and at their head are R. Muḥār and R. Joseph and R. Ḥiyyā". Nor, apparently, did the copier of Samawāl know that Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar is also called 'Umariyya, and decided that it is to be read: 'Imādiyya, but 'Imādiyya was only just then founded, by Zangī, who was 'Imad al-Dīn (and from whom it gets its name), in 1142; see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 92f.; as against it, 'Umariyya i.e. Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar, was an ancient and important city, with a big Jewish population, see the article "Djazīrat Ibn 'Umar" in *EJ*² (by Elisséeff), and see the map in Le Strange, *ibid.*, facing p. 87. See al-Harawī, *Ziyārāt*, 68: 'it is said about Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar (in his version Madīnat al-Jazīra) that it is the second city built after the flood, as it is close to the mountain al-Jūdī (on which Noah's ark rested; as to the first city built after the flood, some say it was Babylon, while others say it was Harrān). Mulhāt, Alamūt, see *ibid.*, 221, and the article Ḥasan-i-Šabbāh (by Hudgson) in *EJ*². See the editor's (Asher) notes in his edition of Benjamin of Tudela, vol. II, 155f., and, on p. 156, the parallelism between Mulhāt and Marco Polo's Mulahet. See the story of the messiah in Samawāl Ibn 'Abbās in his *Iḥām al-yahūd*, edited by Perlmann: *PAAJR*, 32(1964), 89ff.; see in Mann, *Hatequfa*, 24 (1925/6), 341ff., a summing up of the whole affair; there he lists more sources, which are copied from Benjamin. Mann finds a connection between these events and the second crusade, but such a direct relationship did not exist, see Grätz, *Gesch.*, VI, 247ff. See details on Zayn al-dīn in Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, XI, 100ff., 113, 114, 140, 279, 302f., 331; cf. Bosworth, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 176. See also: Loeb, *REJ*, 16(1888), 215; Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 12; Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam Yesh.*, 153, assumed that the name al-Rō'ī is derived from the name of the city Rayy, which is not correct, as a man from Rayy is called al-Rāzī; Steinschneider, *Geschichtslit.*, 48; Poliak, *Madde'ē ha-yahadūt*, II, 404f.; Friedländer, *JQR*, NS 2(1911/2), 503ff. Abū'l-Fidā', in his *Mukhtasar*, cited in a shortened version some details from the *Iḥām al-yahūd*, and it was copied (from MS Vatican no. 272) by Silvestre de Sacy, *Chrest.*, I, 363f., cf. Goitein, *JJS*, 4(1953), 78f. and n.5, and also *PAAJR*, 23 (1954), 37, where he refuted the identification of Solomon b. Rūgī as David al-Rō'ī. A view similar to mine, about the identification of David al-Rō'ī in Benjamin of Tudela and Menaḥem b. Solomon b. Rūgī in Obadiah the Proselyte, was already expressed by Mann, in his above-mentioned article in *Hatequfa* and also in *REJ*, 89 (1930), 257. The name Rūgī is somewhat of a mystery; it might have been a Persian name, derived from Rūzbihān, which is in Hebrew Yōmṭōv, and it might have been pronounced Rūjī (on Rūj = Rūz, see the Persian dictionaries); but this is only a conjecture. See also Fleischer, *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/91), 222ff., who reviews the sources and tries to prove (following Harkavy) that it is David al-Rō'ī who was the writer of a fragment of a poem edited by Harkavy (in 1901/2), and by Fluser and Safrai (in 1981/2), see his references. Petahiah of Regensburg: *Ha-sibbūv*, 7. See another version of what Petahiah said on the messiah, from a Warsaw manuscript, in A. David, *Koveṣ al-Yad*, 13(1995/6), 241f., 257f.

18. *The second half of the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth century*

(249) Elisséeff thought that he found, in a manuscript of Ibn ʿAsākir, information about the clothing restrictions that Nūr al-dīn reenforced against the *dhimmīs*, in 1148. But all it says is that Nūr al-dīn imposed the *sunna* in Aleppo by oppressing the Shiites (*al-rāfiḍa*), canceled their formula in the *ādhān* (call to prayer), and introduced again the external marks of the faith; but Nūr al-dīn did indeed persecute the protected people, as we read in Michael the Syrian, who relates that in his time a eunuch by the name of Fakhr al-dīn ʿAbd al-Masīh, who came from Antioch, ruled Mosul (his name shows that he was a Christian), and was beneficent to the local Christians. However, Nūr al-dīn passed the governance of Mosul to one of his nephews, and it was this nephew who promulgated the dress restrictions of the protected people; he required of the Jews that they wear a yellow patch. The details about the matters of the governance in 565 (1169/70) can be read in Ibn al-Athīr; according to him Quṭb al-dīn Mawdūd, son of Zangī, ruled over Mosul, dying in that year, in Dhū'l-ḥijja, i.e., August or September 1170, after a protracted illness. His eldest son, ʿImād al-dīn Zangī, substituted for him during the illness, and ʿAbd al-Masīh was his official and the *de facto* ruler of Mosul; then Nūr al-dīn dismissed the two of them, ʿImād al-dīn and ʿAbd al-Masīh, and handed the rule over to Sayf al-dīn Ghāzī, another son of Quṭb al-dīn. These changes of government meant that Nūr al-dīn actually ruled over all of northern Iraq, and as such even passed over the Euphrates at the head of an army, in Muḥarram 566, shortly after the death of Quṭb al-dīn, in September or October 1170; on 22 January 1171, Mosul fell into his hands, and he then proceeded, as stated, to transfer the governance of the city to Sayf al-dīn Ghāzī, appointing some kind of monitors over him; thus these restrictions were not issued prior to 1171.

We learn about a natural disaster in 554, i.e., 1156, from a fragment of a Jewish chronicle, "History of the Ishmaelite Kings"; in that year "the Tigris river overflowed, reaching Baghdad and destroying many towns".

A conflict between the Jews and the Muslims erupted in al-Madā'in (ancient Māhōzē) in 573 (1177/8); Muslims went from there to Baghdad, in June 1178, to lodge a complaint with the authorities against the Jews; the local Jews had a synagogue adjacent to the mosque, and they complained that the Muslims too often cantillate the *ādhān*, the call to prayer. The Muslims appeared before Caliph al-Mustaḍī and carried out an *istighātha*, an interruption of prayer in the caliph's main mosque, but the soldiers stationed there chased them away. As a result, the mob, in the name of Islam, rioted in Baghdad; they attacked the soldiers and caused much damage to the mosque, then the mob looted the grocery stores, most of them Jewish-owned; when the caliph's guard intervened, the riots got worse; part of the mob then headed for the synagogue in Dār al-Basāsīrī, looted it, broke the windows, desecrated the Torah scroll, removed it from the synagogue with its torn sheets, with the Jews not daring to resist. In the end, the caliph ordered that the synagogue of al-Madā'in be seized, razed to the ground, and a mosque built on the site.

Shortly afterwards, there were reverberations of a messianic ferment encompassing Persia, Iraq, Palestine, and Egypt, when a rumor spread about "a man in Iṣfahān, by the name of Abū Saʿīd b. Daʿūdī" who said "that he (the messiah) will appear after seven years" (this was to be about 1178), but he postponed the time of the redemption for another seven years, when, apparently, the source giving us this information was written; the source being a letter ascribed to Maimonides—undoubtedly false, but it does not obviate the possibility of a kernel of truth; apparently, it speaks of someone in the exilarchic family ('Daʿūdī'); there may have been a connection between this messianic movement and the persecutions and riots at the time of Caliph al-Mustaḍīr, some of which we have seen happening at al-Madā'in. Yet, the fact that the source is unreliable and its nature vague should be borne in mind.

It may be assumed that these few episodes of the second half of the twelfth century, are only the tip of the iceberg of oppression, restrictions and blackmail, carried out against the protected people, yet only some of it has been preserved in the Arabic chronicles. It is possible that one of the results of this pressure was apostasy, especially among educated and wealthy people, examples of which we shall meet below; a reminiscence of them has been preserved. Ibn al-Jawzī, the important writer who lived at the time (he died in 1200) and was among the main preachers (*wāʿiz*) of the Ḥanbali school, and head of the most important *madāris*, religious academies, of Baghdad, takes pride in his memoirs at having converted about 200 of the protected people.²⁴⁹

(250) There is a version of a letter from the first half of the thirteenth century, by one of the Shāfiʿī personalities in Baghdad, the *qāḍī* Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. ʿAlī b. al-Faḍl, or Ibn Faḍlān, that he wrote to Caliph al-Mustansir (as it should be read). The letter is from 626 (1228/9), and full of complaints against the protected people, describing their comfortable lives in Baghdad in contradistinction to the promotion elsewhere of the religious laws pertaining to them. He especially relates to the poll tax, noting that it cannot be reduced below one dinar, but may be increased even to 100. The protected people are even appointed to high posts, such as in charge of the *makhzan* (land tax office), and they even allow themselves to fire Muslims from their posts. Their shopkeepers weigh goods falsely and their money changers steal gold and silver, giving instead copper; he lists the relevant religious laws deriving from some of the previous caliphs, especially regarding discriminatory clothing and signs.

In 628, i.e., 1230/1, there is information regarding the crucifixion of a Jew who converted to Islam, married a Muslim woman, and returned to

²⁴⁹ On Nūr al-dīn, see Ibn ʿAsākir (photo edition), XVI, 293, cf. Elisséeff, *BEO*, 25(1972), 128, 137: Michael the Syrian, III, 342, (text: I, 698f.); Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, XI, 331, 355, 362-365. 1159/60: MS Sassoon 578, see Sassoon, *Ōhel david*, I, 371; see the description of the damages in Baghdad: Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, X, 189f. (under AH 554); the inundation in 1156 began on 18 Rabīʿ I, 9 April; the events in Madā'in: Ibn Jawzī, *ibid.*, X, 275; Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid.*, XI, 447; cf. El-Ali, *Mesopotamia*, 3-4(1968/9), 421. Iṣfahān, see Bodl Opp add. 8*, 36 (*Cat.* 2425-11), fol. 63bff., edited by Neubauer, *REJ*, 4(1882), 173ff.; see F. Baer, *MGWJ*, 70(1926), 155ff., who related the messianic beliefs to the third crusade, ascribing full credibility to the letter; cf. Fischel, *Starr Mem. Vol.*, 116. The conversion: Ibn Jawzī, *Lafta*, 81.

Judaism. There is information about harsh riots against the protected people in Bukhārā, in 637, i.e., 1239/40. At the head of the rioters was a certain Abū'l-Karam, who claimed that he was God's messenger, *al-mahdī*, and ordered the killing of all Jews and Christians, something which led to much robbing and killing. At about the same time, Abū'l-Tulayq, Ma'tūq, who was known as Ibn Shuqayr al-Munkar, a resident of the Qarāh quarter in Baghdad, was going wild; (along with his adherents, apparently) he abused Jews and Christians, forced them to dismount, and humiliated them. In 649, i.e., 1251/2, there is information about the vizier's grandson, 'Alī b. Abū'l-Faṭḥ b. Abū'l-Faraj, murdering a Jewish money-changer and his wife (who dared to lodge a complaint), and taking their money. There was a kind of Jewish revolt in 654, i.e., 1256; then the Tigris overflowed and the Jews built a dam to protect their quarter, an act that for some reason led to a severe confrontation between them and the Muslims; the Jews even summoned "the men of Khaybar(?)" and used weapons against the Muslims, for which they were later punished.²⁵⁰

19. *The Mongol conquest*

(251) At the beginning of the thirteenth century, at first far away, the Mongols began organizing and within a generation put an end to the five-hundred year reign of the Abbasids. In the spring of AH 617, i.e., AD 1220, the people known as Tatars advanced westwards to Irbil and its environs, a distance of some 100 kilometers from the Tigris and Mosul, between the Upper Zāb and the Lower Zāb, after having conquered the cities of Bukhārā and Khawārizm. There was indescribable slaughter in all of the localities they conquered and looting of all property; after taking what they needed, they put everything else, such as huge piles of silk, to the torch. As for Irbil, itself, it appears that they reached an agreement with the local ruler, who retained his post until 1233.

For about sixteen years, the Mongols kept threatening Mosul, maintaining the pressure on the city and its environs, and looting and killing throughout the area. Eventually, Badr al-dīn Lu'lu', sultan of Mosul, capitulated to the Mongols, and later participated in their campaigns of conquest. He also bought the Irbil fortress from them for the sum of 70,000 dinars.

An interesting testimony regarding the Mongol forays in the Mosul area, is the letter of an anonymous writer, of the retinue of the *nāsī* (i.e., a member of the exilarchic family) Solomon (apparently: b. Jesse), to his master the *nāsī*, who was then in Fustat. The time of the letter: December 1236. The writer describes how he succeeded in saving his own life and the

²⁵⁰ See Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 64ff.; Šafadī, *al-Wāfi*, V, 200f.: the *qāḍī* Ibn Faḍlān was the head of *al-madrasa al-mustansiriyya*, and he describes his excellent virtues and his knowledge of the laws; he died in 631 (1233/4); cf. Ben Jacob, *Zion*, 15(1950), 62. The crucifixion: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 23f.; Bukhārā: *ibid.*, 127. Abū'l-Tulayq: *ibid.*, 150; he was a grocer; died in 639 (1241/2); Qarāh: there were several quarters in Baghdad called al-Qarāh (the garden) of so-and-so, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 45. The vizier's grandson: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *ibid.*, 205. The struggle about the dam: *ibid.*, 318; cf. Zayyāt, *Mashriq*, 36(1938), 154: those Jews used to call themselves *khaybarīs*.

group of people with him, when the Mongols ('the Tatars') attacked 'Imrāniyya, near Mosul. Solomon and the other people with him were then in 'Imrāniyya, praying there on Yom Kippur. They were in the synagogue, which by luck the Mongols did not attack. At night they sought to climb the mountain, hiding in the thicket. Along the way they saw a group of 50 Mongol horsemen, and when already hidden, 25 horsemen passed right next to them. The writer and his group stayed on the mountain for eight days. When they descended from the mountain they saw that the country was full of corpses. This is confirmation of what the chronicles report about the widespread Mongol killing and the fear that gripped the population, including, of course, the Jews; also characteristic of them is the description of the sudden departure of Mongol cavalry units and their later return, or the arrival of other cavalry units, one after the other. These events took place on Yom Kippur of that year and afterwards, i.e., 11-19 September 1236, about three months before the letter was written. As to 'Imrāniyya, Yāqūt tells us that it was "a large village and fortress, east of Mosul"; "there is a cave there, said to be the cave of Da'ūd, a pilgrimage site"—which explains why the Jews of Mosul assembled, of all places, in that synagogue, which was apparently next to the cave.²⁵¹

(252) Mongol strength was then ascending. In 638, i.e., 1240/1, the Mongols sent an emissary on behalf of "the king of the east and the west", to all the Muslim rulers, demanding that they capitulate and that the walls of their towns be pulled down. Four years later, Caliph al-Musta'ṣim appointed Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-^cAlqamī, known as Mu'ayyad al-dīn, "helper of the faith", as vizier; it is he who helped Hūlāgū in his war against the caliphate and in the conquest of Baghdad. In 1251, Mongke was declared the great khan, and his brother Hulago was ordered to conquer the west, and he began his advance in autumn 1253; then the Mongols conquered large areas of Persia, and in September 1257, sent an ultimatum to the caliph in Baghdad. The vizier Mu'ayyad al-dīn, advised the caliph to capitulate to the Mongol demands: destroying the fortifications, filling in the defensive trenches, and that either he, or his vizier, appear before Hūlāgū. After repeated pressure and psychological warfare, the caliph gave in, and the Mongols conquered Baghdad on 10 February 1258; the exciting episodes of that campaign are recorded in the Mongol books of history.

²⁵¹ AH 617: Ibn al-^cIbrī (Bar Hebraeus, *Duwal*), 407ff; see *idem*, the *Chronicle* (Bedjan), 402f.; (Budge) 469f., with dates that are different from those of Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XIII, 86f., 94f.; Irbil is mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 34: al-Bāl, while describing Mosul and its surroundings. See Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 186-189, who notes that it is a big city with a strong fortress, in which there are many markets and houses. (Yāqūt did not manage to add that Irbil was conquered by the Mongols, although he lived for some nine more years after the conquest.) Cf. Wu, *Dissert.*, 75f.; see the article Irbil, in *Er*² (by D. Sourdél). Irbil might have been conquered in 1236, as indicated by Giorgis Wardā (who was himself from Irbil) under AH 633: "at that time the Tatars arrived in Irbil", see Hilgenfeld, 14; cf. Fiey, *Chrétien* (1975), 5f.; the acquisition of the fortress: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicle* (Bedjan), 506; (Budge), 431. The letter to the *nāsī* Solomon: 93, a, lines 8ff.; cf. Goitein, *Levi della Vida Pres. Vol.* 1, 398ff.; 'Umrāniyya: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 723.

There are no details regarding the fate of the Jews of Baghdad during the conquest. It appears that, initially, there was a Mongol tendency to discriminate against the Jews, for it became known that Mongke Khan, in 1251, exempted from taxes the Christian priests and monks and Muslim clerics, but not the Jewish leaders. According to one of the sources, during Hülāgū's conquest of Baghdad, there were in it 36,000 *jizya* paying Jews and 16 synagogues; the figures for the Christians, were 43,000, and 56 churches. According to Ibn Kathīr, not a single Muslim, only Jews and Christians, survived the slaughter; only those Muslims who found refuge in the homes of Christians and Jews, or at the vizier's, Ibn al-°Alqamī (who is Mu'ayyad al-dīn), a Shiite, survived; also surviving was a group of merchants who had received a letter of protection after paying large sums of money to save themselves and their property. It should be noted that Hülāgū was greatly influenced by his wife, Daqūz Khātūn, a Christian, as was the mother of the great khan, Mongke and some of his wives.

After a while much of the Baghdad Muslim population returned to their city, and then there was a rekindling of Jew hatred. In June 1285, we hear of the looting of the Baghdad Jewish quarter, the local looters being joined by army units allied with the Mongols: Kurds, Turcomans, and Arabs, as well. In 1288, we learn that the *amīr* Arūq (or: Arīq Baqā) ordered the confiscation of all the letters of protection issued by the *amīr* Ardūqiyā and Sa°d al-dawla (the Jewish minister, below, sec. 277), apparently relating to the Jews, though the issue is not entirely clear. Harsh riots against the Jews, including the beheading of the aforementioned Jewish minister, Sa°d al-dawla (on 29 February 1291), took place after the death of the khan Arghūn. Many Jews were murdered. The riots spread throughout the country, especially since the courtiers accused the Jew Sa°d al-dawla of causing the death of Arghūn. The riots in Baghdad lasted three days. The name of a Jewish youth killed then, has been preserved—Ibn Falāla. All the members of Sa°d al-dawla's family were then arrested, and their property seized.²⁵²

20. Exilarchs

(253) In the main chapter on the exilarchate, the last name on my list (above, sec. 85) was Hezekiah (the second) b. David, who had a lengthy term of office, from (about) 1000 until (about) 1060. Here I will survey the

²⁵² The events of 1240-1243: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XIII, 155-165. The start of Hülāgū's campaign: Juvainī, 610. See Howorth, III, 196-205; Boyle, *Journal of Sem. St.*, 6:145, 1961; Spuler, *Mongolen*, 49ff.; Wu, Dissert., 68-80. The taxes: Bar Hebraeus, the *Chronicle* (Bedjan), 489, bottom; (Budge), 418; cf. Spuler, *ibid.*, 200. The number of the Jews: see Ghunayma, 152, who cites a manuscript of a work by Yāsīn al-°Umarī: *al-durr al-maknūn fī ma'āthir al-māḍiya min al-qurūn* ("hidden pearls about events in centuries of the past"); Jews and Christians were spared: Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XIII, 202. Christian women: Bausani, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 541, cf. Ashtor (Strauss), *Zion*, 4(1939), 53. On the favorable treatment of Christians under Hülāgū's rule and that of his successors, see also Starr, *Zion*, 6(1941), 158ff.; the pillage in 1258: Bar Hebraeus (Bedjan), 558; (Budge), 476. Sequestration of the safety documents: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 464ff.; cf. Howorth, III, 342-345.

information regarding the last exilarchs, the information being sketchy, even vague.

We know of DAVID B. HEZEKIAH, that he stayed in Palestine during the 30s and 40s of the eleventh century, apparently until about 1055. He may then have returned to Babylonia, perhaps after a stay in Egypt and Spain. Mann believed that David sought the status of a partner in the Palestinian leadership, with the agreement of the gaon, Solomon b. Judah; but this assumption cannot be confirmed by the sources. In our sources David is called *nāsī*, even "*nāsī* of the diasporas of all of Israel", yet no contemporary source referring to him as exilarch has been found. Thus one may assume that, due to circumstances unknown to us, David b. Hezekiah did not attain the position of exilarch. We have an Arabic source, the diary of Abū °Alī al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad, known as Ibn al-Bannā'. According to him, a controversy regarding the exilarchate broke out among the Jews of Baghdad. "They sought to enthrone a man of the seed of Da'ūd (i.e., King David), but Ibn Faḍlān, who favored someone else, was opposed, and they quarreled over it"; these events took place in February 1069. There were then two Ibn Faḍlān brothers, one by the name of Abū °Alī. One of them died on 28 December 1068. This episode points to the great involvement of wealthy Jews in the affairs of the Jewish leadership, exactly as was the case one-hundred-fifty years earlier, when the family of Neḥīrā and that of Aaron b. °Amram were involved in the great controversies of the time (*supra*, sec. 137). Now, this controversy regarding the appointment of the exilarch was certainly no less eventful, but nothing about it is mentioned in any Jewish source. It may be that David's rival (who was appointed exilarch) was °Azariah b. Solomon b. Josiah b. Zakkai.

David's son, HEZEKIAH (THE THIRD), was undoubtedly exilarch, as we learn from the letter of the Palestinian gaon, Abiathar ha-Kohen b. Elijah, writing on 4 July 1091, to the Babylonian yeshivot and also to "the *rāshūt* of our Lord and Master the Exilarch Hezekiah". The son of this Hezekiah, David, was also exilarch, as we learn from the "verses of blessing for the Exilarch Ḥisdai b. David", published by Assaf, where, among other things, we read: "hearken you to what our Lord son of our Lord, exilarch son of an exilarch (here follow some flowery phrases of praise), Ḥisdai the great *nāsī* exilarch of the diasporas of all of Israel (words of praise) son of... David the great *nāsī* exilarch of the diasporas of all Israel....". Since we have clear information about Ḥisdai and his time, as we shall see below, it becomes clear that this pertains to Hezekiah's son, who was exilarch between the time of Hezekiah and Ḥisdai, at the beginning of the twelfth century.²⁵³

²⁵³ A court document of the end of the eleventh century deals with an earlier document, regarding a house, "signed by our Lord David the great *nāsī*, *nāsī* of all of Israel, son of our Lord and *nāsī* Yehizqiyāhū (!), exilarch of all of Israel, (both) of blessed memory"; see TS 18 J 2, f. 5. See also: the memorial list ENA 2592, fs. 6-7, in Mann, *Jews*, II, 100, which mentions "...Hezekiah exilarch of all of Israel... and his son, his honorable great sanctity our Lord and Master David the *nāsī*, *nāsī* of all diasporas of Israel"; the time of the list: after 1098, since Nisim b. Nehorai b. Nissim is mentioned among the deceased. On David's stay in Palestine see Gil, *Hist.*, 542-544, and see *idem*, *Palest.*, II, 113; III, 8f. (letters nos. 45, 416), cf. Mann, *Jews*, I, 112f.; I give up my view (*Hist.*, 544) that David, the son of Hezekiah II was exilarch (as assumed also by Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 23). See the letter 255: out of charity money, left by Nehorai b. Nissim upon his visit to Jerusalem, "the son of the exilarch" received 1 dinar; he was apparently David b. Hezekiah, probably about

(254) We have seen (above, sec. 248) that the person referred to by Benjamin of Tudela as David al-Rō'ī, actually Menaḥem b. Solomon b. Rūgī, studied with Ḥisdai, the exilarch, i.e., ḤISDAI B. DAVID. A bill of sale drawn up in Damascus in Tevet AM 4874 (beginning on 12 December 1113) notes that it was written "under the authority of our Lord Ḥisdai the exilarch", an earlier time from what Poznanski and Mann thought (1158, or 1146/7). That Ḥisdai b. David was apparently the exilarch "Ḥisdai the great *nāsī* exilarch of all the diasporas of Israel", mentioned in the story of the appointment of the *nagid* of the Jews of Egypt, who was (the *nagid*) "helper of the people of God.... by authorization of our Lord exilarch.... and also our Lord head of the yeshiva of the Desired Land (Palestine)" etc. His title and lineage we learn from the blessings for the exilarch that Assaf published, that I mentioned in the preceding section. It should not be gathered from the fact that his name and authority are mentioned in Damascus and Fustat, that his court was actually in one of these two cities, what is only known is that the Jewish communities, certainly the 'Babylonians' among them, were inclined to accept the idea of the world-wide authority of the exilarch; as to the "head of the yeshiva of the Desired Land", his actual domicile was Damascus, then Fustat, after the yeshiva was exiled from Palestine; thus that anonymous *nagid* was appointed with the approval of the two authorities, the Babylonian and the Palestinian.

DANIEL, SON OF ḤISDAI B. DAVID, became exilarch sometime before 1120, for he is mentioned in the story of the restrictions looming over the Jews of Baghdad that are mentioned above (sec. 246): "our Lord Daniel may the Merciful guard him, son of our Lord Ḥisdai may the memory of the righteous be blessed". He is also mentioned in the colophon of a book that contained seven treatises, that was his property before being transferred (sold?) to others. The book was presented as a gift (so it would seem) to

1053. See Ibn al-Bannā' in *BSOAS*, 19(1957), 27, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 18. The Ibn Faḍlān family was then one of the important, rich Baghdadian families. David b. 'Azariah, in a letter he wrote in about 1055, notes that Abū 'Alī b. Faḍlān "was given, before many years" the title *hōd* (glory of) *ha-zeqēnīm* (the elders), see Gil, *Palest.*, II, 646 (no. 354). Abū 'Alī b. Faḍlān is mentioned in another Arabic source as well, in AH 450, 1058/9, see Ibn Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VIII, 190; he was secretary of Tughrilbakk's wife (above, sec. 243). Some two generations earlier, in AH 386, AD 996, there is mention of Abū 'Alī b. Faḍlān's refusal to grant a sum of money as a loan for the vizier, which caused a wave of anti-Jewish persecutions and confiscations; that Abū 'Alī was probably the grandfather of the Abū 'Alī b. Faḍlān who was involved in the matter of the exilarch's appointment. See Abū Shujā', 282, cf. Fischel, *Jews*, 33; Busse, *Chalif*, 490. The death of one of the brothers: Ibn al-Bannā', *ibid.*, 16; and see there also p. 289: on 10 Rajab (5 May 1069), there was an attempt to murder Ibn Faḍlān; a bedouin intended to knife him, since Ibn Faḍlān claimed that the bedouin owed him money; Ibn al-Bannā' adds that the matter is doubtful (whether the attempted murder was in doubt, or Ibn Faḍlān's claim was, is unknown); see *ibid.*, 426: about three weeks later (30 May), the caliph was about to repay 11,000 dinars to Ibn Faḍlān, but he was afraid of inviting him to the palace, lest he be killed by the populace. It seems that these events, connected to Ibn Faḍlān, fit into the events of 1058-1071, which I mentioned above (sec. 243), in which—as we saw—Abū 'Alī b. Faḍlān was involved. My interpretation differs from that of Makdisi, editor of Ibn al-Bannā', in *BSOAS* *ibid.*, 436. Abiathar ha-Kohen's letter, see in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 372f. (no. 553). Hezekiah II might have had another son, David's brother, named Joseph, of whom it is said that he wrote rules of ritual slaughter, see TS 12.734, in Mann, *Jews*, II, 145 n.7, *Texts*, II, 47f. and n.94. Apparently, this Joseph lived in Fustat. On David b. Hezekiah, see Assaf, *Ginzē q.*, 4 (1929/30), pp. 63f., whose identification of Ḥisdai's father is wrong; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 208 and n.13.

Nahum ha-Kohen b. Maṣṣūr, after being in the hands of Jacob b. ʿAlī, from August 1174 (apparently after the death of Daniel b. Ḥisdai, as we shall see below); “Daniel the exilarch son of Ḥisdai the exilarch” had it from 25 April 1135.

According to data at our disposal, Daniel b. Ḥisdai had a long exilarchate. We have the date of his death from ʿAmr b. Mattā, in his history of the eastern patriarchs; according to him, in the year when the patriarch ʾIshūʿyahav and the caliph died, the *qāḏī al-quḏāh* and “Daniel the *rās al-jālūt* (exilarch) of the Jews died”. ʾIshūʿyahav died on 25 May Sel. 1486, i.e., AD 1175 (Sel. 1486: from September 1174 to August 1175). Petahiah of Regensburg arrived in Baghdad a year after Daniel’s death: in 1176; we have two clear hooks to grasp regarding the time of Petahiah’s ‘turnaround’. One is his noting of Damascus, “the great city ruled by the king of Egypt”; the “king of Egypt” is Saladin, who conquered Damascus in AH 570, i.e., AD 1174, in other words, Petahiah arrived in Damascus after 1174. From this standpoint one may believe the above remark of ʿAmr b. Mattā, that Daniel b. Ḥisdai died in 1175, even though there was no *qāḏī al-quḏāh*, or caliph who died in the same year: *qāḏī al-quḏāh* Abūʾl-Barakāt Jaʿfar b. ʿAbd al-Wahīd al-Thaqafī died in Jumādā II of AH 563, III-IV 1168; his successor, Abūʾl Ḥasan al-Dāmghānī, died in 583, i.e., 1187/8. Caliph al-Mustanjid died in 9 Rabīʿ II 566, 20 December 1170; his successor, al-Mustaḏī, died on 2 Dhūʾl-qaʿda 575, 31 March 1180. The second hook is implied in Petahiah’s *Sibbūn*, according to which his stay in Baghdad was before 1187, the year of Saladin’s victory in Palestine. In summary, the most likely assumption is that Petahiah was in Baghdad in 1176, and that Daniel b. Ḥisdai died in 1175, i.e., he served as exilarch at least fifty-five years (1120-1175). Even after Daniel’s death, Petahiah heaps praise and admiration on him and his important status, more than that of the head of the yeshiva: “he was a more (distinguished) prince than the head of the yeshiva” (i.e.: than Samuel b. Eli).

Abraham Ibn Ezra was certainly impressed by the personality and status of Daniel b. Ḥisdai, when writing in his commentary on Zechariah 12:7: “the house of David is still in Baghdad, the Ishmaelite royal city, and they are the great important family of exilarchs whose genealogy stretches back to ancient times”.

Benjamin of Tudela, who preceded Petahiah by about a decade, perceived in Daniel the most important figure in Baghdad; “and the greatest of them all is Daniel b. Ḥisdai (as it should be read), known as our Lord head of the diasporas of all of Israel”; he also mentions the “book of genealogy reaching back to David King of Israel”; he was appointed by the caliph, who gave him “a seal of authority”, according to a tradition from the days of the *meshugāʿ*, the ‘madman’, i.e., the Prophet of Islam. Further along he describes his great honor and splendor, a description partly based on what he may himself have gathered during his stay in Baghdad, and even more on what he read in Nathan the Babylonian. Then he lists all the districts in the eastern Muslim world where Jewish diasporas existed, where “the exilarch imparts authority to them.... to appoint over every community a *rav* and a cantor” etc. He also describes his wealth, “inns and gardens and orchards”, and his income from the taxes paid by the Jews

“every week(!)”. It is he who appoints (grants ordination to) even the head of the yeshiva.

Typical of Daniel’s status and activities is a letter preserved in the Geniza, that was written in Tishri Sel. 1473 (October 1161); the letter, whose preamble has not been preserved, addresses Nethanel ha-Levi b. Moses in Fustat, and speaks of the aforementioned’s appointment as “head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora.... the (head of the) great Court of all of the cities of Egypt and all the countries, he will teach and judge and appoint the courts for each and every region” etc. The letter contains a halachic discussion about ordination; interesting from the historical standpoint is the denunciation of the priestly Palestinian geonim (descendants of Elijah ha-Kohen b. Solomon), who succeeded “our Lord our *nāsī* Daniel (b. ‘Azariah), who were lax in their ways” etc.; I have already dealt with this in my book on Palestine, here one should consider that the writer is the exilarch, Daniel b. Ḥisdai; mentioned there is his appointment by the caliph al-Mustanjid (who died, as I mentioned above, in 1170): “the important exalted personages (who are) the *imāms* (caliphs), descendants of the pure prophets.... who find salvation (*al-mustanjida* in God”); *al-mustanjida* clearly hints to who was then the caliph, al-Mustanjid. The letter also contains echoes of the events in Baghdad that led to “the awful illnesses” (probably meaning the plagues; there is no need, as Assaf and Mann felt, to correct the word they used for illnesses, *ḥalō’ōt*, *telā’ōt*, hardships), it drained our strength and impoverished the city our fortress, to the extent that we didn’t even have a penny left, we sold our clothes and were left only with our homes, and we and those with us are in great distress” etc. This is different from what Benjamin of Tudela describes, and whose description of Daniel b. Ḥisdai’s wealth I mentioned here above.

The Babylonian communities took pains to mention in the deeds, the *rāshūt* (authority) of Daniel b. Ḥisdai. Thus in a fragment of a deed in Fustat, of Elul Sel. 1476 (August 1165): “the *rāshūt* of our Lord our *nāsī* our King Daniel the great *nāsī* exilarch of the diasporas of all Israel may his name last forever”; similar formulas are in a *ketubbā* of Tuesday, 17 Sivan Sel. 1478 (6 June 1167), also in Fustat.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ See Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 51; the sale deed of Damascus: ENA 4020, f.15, ed. Mann, *Jews*, II, 208; see Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 115f.; Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 23; *idem*, *Jews*, I, 185, assumed, without sufficient ground, that the Ḥisdai mentioned in the sale deed of Damascus was a grandson of David. b. ‘Azariah, son of Samuel b. David; or the son of David b. David b. ‘Azariah (*ibid.*, II, 358). See the document about the appointment of the Egyptian nagid in Adler, *JQR*, 9(1896/7), 717f., and Mann’s opinion on the personages mentioned in it: *Jews*, I, 253, which differs from what I wrote here. True, it was in that period that a Karaites was *nāsī* (who called himself exilarch), Ḥisdai b. Hezekiah, see Mann, *Texts*, II, according to the Index. See the blessings for the exilach, in Assaf, *Ginzē q.*, 4(1929/30), 64. See a different view of Ḥisdai also in Sh. Sela, in *M. Gil Jub. Vol.*, 269. Mention of David b. Ḥisdai, see 87, b, lines 6-7; *ibid.*, g, he is mentioned (without mentioning his name) together with his mother and his pupils. The colophon: 92, and see the preamble to this document; Schechter, its first editor, did not read some of its important passages, see his *Saadyana*, 53 (no. xxvii); cf. also Poznanski, *ZfJB*, 7(1903), 181f. See ‘Amr b. Mattā, 106; Petahiah, 9, 28, who was mistaken about the name of Daniel’s father: Solomon instead of Ḥisdai. The conquest of Damascus: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, XI, 415. The death of the *qāḍī l-quḍāh* al-Thaqafi: *ibid.*, 333; al-Dāmghāni: *ibid.*, 563; al-Mustanjid: *ibid.*, 360; al-Mustadī, *ibid.*, 459. Palestine held by the crusaders: Petahiah, 32. See also Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 19 and *ibid.*, 116, on Abraham Ibn Ezra in Baghdad; (on the

(255) After the death of Daniel b. Ḥisdai, in 1175, a new exilarch was not appointed for a while, as noted by Petahiah in his *Sibbūv*, for 'the king' "did not appoint an exilarch except on the advice of the leaders of the Jews, and no one was fitting to be the exilarch". Before then he noted that when he was in "new Nineveh", i.e. Mosul, he found two *nesī'im* there, "one by the name of Master David and one by the name of Master Samuel, who were sons of two brothers (i.e.: they were cousins, as it should be understood) who were of the seed of King David". When in Baghdad (1176): "they still had not reached an accord". He writes the contrary in another sentence: "and Master Eleazar is the exilarch under the head of the yeshiva". Yet that Eleazar is not mentioned in any other source at our disposal, and Mann has already expressed the opinion that this information is completely wrong, perhaps a scribal error, and it appears that he was one of the "heads of the yeshiva" mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, as we shall see below. Poznanski was inclined to accept this information, thinking that it may be confirmed by the poems of Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian, who mentions an Eleazar, "splendid and cherished", who was appointed "*nagid* of the holy nation", yet this opinion is in the realm of an assumption, without sufficient backing.

We are groping through the dark regarding the inheritors of the exilarch's throne after Daniel b. Ḥisdai. We have the letter of the gaon, Samuel b. Eli, rival of the exilarchs, of Sivan Sel. 1502, June 1191, to the communities of northern Iraq and Syria; this letter contains a sharp attack against the exilarchic dynasty. The gaon emphasizes that the status of the yeshiva is like that of Moses. The exilarchs did not interfere with the rulings of yeshiva scholars, their function being the tax collection, and similar tasks, functions placed upon them by the regime. He gets inspiration from the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon, in order to stress the upheaval

problem of whether he indeed visited Baghdad, see below, sec. 270.) Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 23, ascribed the encounter with Abraham Ibn Ezra to Ḥisdai, David's father, which is unfounded. See Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 39-41. See the letter as reconstructed by Assaf from three separate fragments, TS 8 J 2, ENA 4011, f. 74, Antonin 1131, in *Tarbiz*, 1 (3; 1929/30), 66ff., and see in the preamble references to previous publications of its parts; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 230-236, who exhaustively clarified the writer's identity as well as that of the addressee and the historical background. Ben-Sasson, *Maim. St.*, 2 (1991), 20 n. 31, was not aware, apparently, of Mann's correct and firm opinion in *Texts*, I, 231f., that the exilarch meant there was Daniel b. Ḥisdai, and assumed the writer to be Daniel b. David b. Daniel b. ʿAzariah; we have no knowledge of such a personality, who seems never to have existed. The matter of Daniel b. ʿAzariah: see Gil, *Hist.*, 738f.; it is worth mentioning the deep respect expressed by Daniel b. Ḥisdai towards Daniel b. ʿAzariah, who preceded him by about 100 years, being of the third generation after Josiah b. Zakkai, whereas Daniel b. Ḥisdai was of the ninth generation after Josiah's brother and competitor, David b. Zakkai; see the geneology in Gil, *ibid.*, 544f.; the impoverishment described by the exilarch may be related to the big inundation of the Tigris mentioned above (sec. 249). The deed fragment of 1165: TS 13 J 3, f. 11, cf. Mann, *Jews*, II, 209 (where the shelf-mark needs correction); see *ibid.* also the matter of the *ketubbā*: BL Or 5561B, fs. 2-3. Mann first assumed that it deals with a *nāsī* called David who lived in Fustat, not identifying him as the Baghdadi exilarch, but later changed his mind: *Texts*, I, 395; and his reading of the *ketubbā*'s date is different. Also preserved is a slip of paper with congratulations to David on the wedding of his daughter (as should be assumed), of which the date is unknown: BL Or 10,653, f.12; see Petahiah, 9f.: David had no sons, only daughters; see also MS Bodl 896, edited by Steinschneider, *Kerem h.*, 9(1856), 40, with flowery phrases regarding the exilarch, also meaning probably Daniel b. Ḥisdai; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 118.

that occurred in their status at the time of David b. Judah, after accusing the contemporary exilarch "who did not read, did not study, his power deriving from monies and the hands of the regime". Mann ascribed these statements to Samuel of Mosul, one of the two cousins, *nesī'im*, mentioned by Petahiah, as we have seen. Disagreeing with him, Assaf tried to prove that the person mentioned was possibly a son of Samuel of Mosul, by the name of David, basing himself on the assumption that Samuel assumed the exilarchate shortly after the death of Daniel b. Hisdai (according to him, in 1176 he was probably already serving as exilarch), while Samuel b. Eli, in his letter, attacks an exilarch new in his post. Poznanski believed that the exilarchate moved from Baghdad to Mosul. Here we have the testimony of al-Ḥarīzī, who visited Mosul around 1216: "from there I went to Ashūr (i.e., Mosul).... where I saw our Lord David the head of the Jewish Diaspora, and his sister's son, Hōdāyā". Darmsteter mentions, in a survey of Jewish manuscripts, that in the year Sel. 1503, in Nisan, i.e., April 1192, Rashi's commentary to Bāvā Mešī'a was copied for the *nāsī* David the exilarch; his opinion that David the exilarch was in Mosul, is likely.

Maimonides, who, as we shall see below, had a rivalry and controversy with the Babylonian gaon, Samuel b. Eli, a number of times expressed in his letters his positive attitude towards the exilarch, apparently David of Mosul. Thus what he wrote on the first of Marheshwan, Sel. 1503, 21 October 1991, that he corresponded with the exilarch and received a letter from him, reading it in his home, while standing, in the presence of many people of Fustat, "from the least to the greatest, all of them listening while standing". He also mentions the controversy between the exilarch and Samuel b. Eli. The address in the exilarch's letter to Maimonides has been preserved: "it will arrive in joy.... to the glorious.... Moses the great *rav*, the fortress and the tower, fount of wisdom sea of intelligence.... son of our Elder, the beloved Maymūn, the pious *rav*, in his time, may he rest in Eden".

Also of assistance in this complex issue of the two cousins, Samuel and David, is a copy of the writs of appointment of two beadles, father and son, to the Ezra the Scribe synagogue. In the writ of appointment of the son, Abū Maṣṣūr, of Iyar Sel. 1512, April 1201, mentioned is that he possessed a letter (of recommendation) of "our *nāsī* David exilarch of the diasporas of all Israel, may his honor be exalted". In other words, further confirmation that at the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, David was the exilarch. It may be that Samuel was exilarch before him, from a short time after the death of Daniel b. Hisdai (1175); we do not know his father's name, but the possibility still remains that this David was the son of Samuel.

David the exilarch is also mentioned by Abraham, the son of Maimonides, when responding to a complaint against Daniel the Babylonian (see below, sec. 262), the student of Samuel b. Eli, who argued against Maimonides' writings. This complaint was sent by Joseph b. Judah b. Simeon, i.e., Ibn ʿAqīn, from his residence in Ḥalab, even asking that Abraham ban the aforementioned Daniel. Abraham refused to do so, because the issue had to do with his father, "and a person should not judge those who are sympathetic to him or those who hate him"; yet when the

matter became known to "the exilarch our Lord David of blessed memory, he banned him".²⁵⁵

(256) Towards the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, we see a number of figures in the exilarchic dynasty referred to as *nesī'im*, who did not serve as exilarchs. Maimonides' contemporary was the *nāsī* Judah b. Josiah b. Solomon, Yedidiah's great grandson, who signed a responsum together with Maimonides: "the responsum of our Master Perahiah to what was presented before the session of the *nesī'ūt* of our Lord Judah, *nāsī* of the diasporas of all Israel". It is mentioned by Sambarī, and a letter to this Judah is preserved in the Geniza.

Benjamin of Tudela mentions among the "heads of yeshivot" that he lists in Baghdad, Ḥaggai the *nāsī* and Zakkai b. Bustanai the *nāsī* of the *siyūm*; perhaps meaning: who occupies himself with learning and teaching. In the great synagogue in Baghdad, on the highest stage, "sits the exilarch with the *nesī'im* of the House of David". In the description, with imagination given some rein, of Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula, Benjamin mentions "Ḥanan the *nāsī* who rules over them", and it may be that one of the descendants of the exilarchic dynasty actually spent time there, and he also mentions Ḥanan's brother, Salmon the *nāsī*; "they are of the seed of David because they have a written genealogy". From there they sent queries, actually to the exilarch (and not to the yeshiva). As to Mosul, "which is Great Ashūr", he finds there "Zakkai the *nāsī* of the seed of David"; it is possible that this was the father of one of the cousins, Samuel and David, whom I mentioned above; it appears that his genealogy reached back to Josiah, brother of David b. Zakkai (first half of the tenth century), as can be gleaned from a genealogical list preserved in the Geniza.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ The two *nesī'im*, Eleazar: Petahiah, 5, 9; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 19, 69, 70; Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 22f. On David and Samuel see Poznanski, *ibid.*, 19 (where he believed them to be Daniel b. Ḥisdai's cousins, but this was not said by Petahiah). See Samuel b. Eli's letter in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1(2.1929/30), 62-70; Mann, *Texts*, I, 237-240, as against Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 3(1931/2), 343. Mann, *ibid.*, 229ff., has an exhaustive discussion on the problem of the relations between the exilarchs and the Babylonian geonim in the twelfth century, and their impact on the relations with the communities of Syria and Egypt. See Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 119-122; al-Ḥarīzī, *Tahkemōnī* (ed. Toporowski), 365; Rashi's commentary: Darmsteter, *Reliques*, I, 116, cf. Berliner, *Rashi*, ix, referring to BL Or 412; see also Poznanski, *ibid.*, 120 n.3. "David the great *nāsī*, exilarch of all Israel" is mentioned in the fragment Dropsie 463. Maimonides on the exilarch's letter: see his *Iggerōt* (Shailat), I, 297. The address of the letter: Steinschneider, *Kerem ḥ.*, 9(1856), 40; Bodl 896, f.15, cf. Poznanski, *ibid.*, 33. Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 24, assumed that, from between the two cousins, it is Samuel who became exilarch, as David remained in Mosul, and his descendants are still mentioned there, several generations after him. However, it is more likely that the exilarchate indeed moved from Baghdad to Mosul. See the copy of the writ of appointment: 91, and see the discussion in Mann, *Texts*, I, 223f. See Abraham Maimuni, *Milḥamōt*, in Maimonides, *Qōveš*, III, 16d; cf. Mann, *ibid.*, I, 402f., n. 19; see there also about that Daniel (b. Saadia) and in *ibid.*, 409ff., a letter from Daniel, dealing with a matter of a *nāsī*: TS 24.41.

²⁵⁶ Judah: Maimonides, *Resp.* (Blau), 655. Perahiah was probably the *dayyān* of Maḥalla, in Egypt; he is mentioned in 97. See Sambarī (Stober), 219f.; see *ibid.*, 219, the mention of the *nāsī* Judah b. Josiah, among the scholars of Egypt, and his signature: *Ye 'ūdā ha-nāsī nesī gālyūt kol isrā'el ben yō'shiyāhū ha-nāsī*; see the letter sent to him, TS Loan 20 (where he is mentioned as "great grandson of Yedidiah"), ed. Mann, *Texts*, I, 404-408 and see the discussion *ibid.*, 396; cf. *idem*, *Jews*, II, 209, 317; Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 136f.; see Benjamin of Tudela, 39, 42, 46, 47. One should notice that Benjamin uses the term *nāsī* not only in referring to the 'Davidic' dynasty, but also meaning generally a leader, such as, e.g.

(257) We meet a great number of *nesī'im* in the first half of the thirteenth century. One of them, the "*nāsī* 'Azariah of Babylonia", arrived in Germany in AM 4988, 1228, and a remedy for speeding childbirth has been transmitted in his name, whereby frankincense is burnt ("pure frankincense known in Ashkenaz as *wīrūkh*" [*Weihrauch*]).

We have relatively much information thanks to copies made of thirteen letters belonging to the correspondence of the *nāsī* Solomon b. Jesse. These letters combine with more information regarding three brothers, sons of the *nāsī* Jesse b. Solomon: Solomon, Josiah and Hōdāyā. We have no information about the father of these brothers, Jesse, except for his, and his father's, name. His father, Solomon, lived, apparently, in the second half of the twelfth century, and we know the name of his father, Nehemiah b. Hōdāyā (below, sec. 259). Their permanent place of residence was Mosul, but they did a lot of traveling among the Jewish communities of Syria and Egypt.

We have a copy of a letter where Jesse (b. Solomon, so it should be assumed) describes his meeting with Maimonides: he arrived at the meeting with his son, Jalāl (this is Jalāl al-dawla, apparently, Hōdāyā, see just below); Abraham, Maimonides' son, was present, as well. Another copy of a letter that may be ascribed to Jesse the *nāsī*, mentions the *nagid*, meaning, apparently, Maimonides' son, Abraham. There is mention of the *nāsī* Hīsdai, who sent a letter from Damascus, relating the destruction of a certain house (in Mosul?), and the matter of the door of the house of 'Imrān. Perahiah the *dayyān* is mentioned as well, i.e., Perahiah b. Joseph, who is also mentioned in the letter of Jalāl al-dawla to Solomon b. Jesse. Also mentioned is a certain 'ajamī, i.e., someone from a Christian country, who keeps accusing, and who demands that the clothes (that he donated to the *nesī'im*?) should be returned to him; this is al-'Ajamī *al-ma'fūn* (may he be accursed).

The time of the brothers is mainly the 1230s and 1240s. As stated, they were Mosul men, but we do not know to which one of the Mosul exilarchs their genealogy extended. There was a strong connection between them and the Egyptian communities. We know of the "Egyptian side" of this connection from the Geniza. In some of the account sheets of the Fustat *heqdēsh* (pious foundation), of the 1180s, there are sums paid to the *nesī'im* and their families. The *nāsī*'s orphans received 40 dirhams a month; the community paid 244 dirhams for the sending off (we do not know the destina-

"Joseph Amarkelā ha-Levi, *nāsī*, in the mountains of Naysābūr" and also *ibid.*, a little earlier: in Samarkand: "Obadiah the *nāsī*", Mosul: *ibid.*, 34. A *nāsī* called Zakkai b. Yedidiah wrote a letter in about 1060 to Abraham ha-Kohen *ha-rōfē* ('the physician') b. Isaac (see concerning him, Gil, *Hist.*, 552-554, 724f.): TS 13 J 15, f. 14, ed. Mann, *Jews*, II, 83f.; this Zakkai might have been one of the ancestors of some of the *nesī'im* of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. See a *nāsī*, also Zakkai, b. Joseph b. Zakkai b. 'Azariah b. Solomon b. Josiah b. Zakkai, etc.: Dropsie 462. That *nāsī*, Zakkai, also apparently belonged to the second half of the twelfth century, probably living in Mosul. According to a source of a legendary nature but possibly with a kernel of historical reality, it was Simeon 'the great', who had settled in Mainz and was said to have been "of the house of David", who caused Rabbēnū Gershon *me'ōr ha-gōlā* to settle there as well, see Jelinek, *Bēt ha-midr.*, V, 148; this may be related to what the Judeo-Arabic Bustanai Geniza story means when it tells about descendants of exilarchs who are not Bustanai's offspring, and live in the lands of the 'ajam, i.e. in Christian lands; see 2.

tion) of the widow of a *nāsī* (unidentified). This was the case in Fustat and also in the provincial cities, as attested by the letters sent to Solomon b. Jesse, and also a letter from Damīra, of February-March 1244, where there is mention of a 40 dirhams *waraq* (a sum equivalent to one dinar) "leasing of beasts for our Lord the *nāsī* Josiah for his trip to Ashmūn and al-Mahalla".

The most information we have is in regards to Solomon b. Jesse, perhaps because of his strong ties with Egypt, something which facilitated the arrival at the Geniza treasures of a number of documents pertaining to him. In a fragment (upper right hand) of a letter of about 1237, there is mention of the *majlis*, the seat of "our Lord, wreath of our heads.... Solomon *nāsī* of the diasporas of Israel"; one of his brothers notes in another fragment, that he met with "our Lord our brother.... Solomon the great *nāsī*"; someone named David, "your slave David", appeals to "our Lord the *nāsī* our Master Solomon *nāsī* of the Diaspora", regarding a debt for silk and cheese. There is a validation of a deed, with the signature of "Solomon b. Jesse the *nāsī* of blessed holy memory", of: Sel. 1549, AD 1238. He is also the signatory of a record of testimony, of Tamuz Sel. 1555, June 1244. Also, there is a query and responsum, the responsum being based on Maimonides, "written by Solomon b. Jesse the *nāsī* of blessed memory".²⁵⁷

(258) In a collection of copies of letters to Solomon b. Jesse, there are letters written to him by one of his two brothers (so it would appear), known as Jalāl al-dawla; this is a kind of title apparently granted by the Turks who then ruled in this part of the Muslim world; we do not know his full name. Perhaps he was Hōdāyā b. Jesse. A letter of December 1236, contains information about the Mosul residence of the *nesī'im* that was falling into disrepair, with advice about how to keep it up. Also, there is the story of the Mongols, presented above (sec. 251). The next letter mentions the writer's stay in Acre, money matters, and mentions another *nāsī* by the name of Hīsdai, who had already been in Hamāh for a long time. There is also the story of the sufferings of his uncle, Solomon, his imprisonment and deportation to Baghdad. The matter of the house in disrepair continued to preoccupy the writer, according to letters that reached him, from Mosul. A group of Mosul Jews, including Muways (=little Mūsā), son of the cantor

²⁵⁷ The *nāsī* °Azariah: Gross, *MWJ*, 10(1883), 67; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 119, with more references; Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 25 assumed that this °Azariah might be a son of Samuel of Mosul, and father of Samuel who was the exilarch at the time of the Mongolian conquest of Baghdad. The letter, which I ascribe to Jesse, TS 8 J 14, f.18, was edited by Fenton, *BSOAS*, 45:1, 1982. Jesse was accompanied by al-Fakhr (mentioned also in 93), who is Fakhr al-dawla, perhaps Jesse's brother, but he did not enter into Maimonides' presence. The other letter: TS 10 J 16, f. 3. Solomon b. Jesse's letters are found in nine Geniza documents: 93-101. See Mann, *Jews*, I, 176, who concluded that in fact we find three brothers there. On the financial contributions for the *nesī'im* see Gil, *Docs.*, 105, with references to the documents; the journey of the *nāsī's* widow: *ibid.*, 347 (no. 88). Josiah's journey: TS NS J 2 (with an amusing episode), ed. Goitein, *Gratz Coll. Anniv. Vol.*, 105f.; Solomon b. Jesse in Geniza fragments: TS 6 J 4, f. 15; TS 6 J 1, f. 28; TS 6 J 4, f. 25; the first two: see Mann, *Jews*, II, 209. The validation: TS AS 145.42. He also signed TS 8 J 10, f. 15, see Mann, *ibid.*; also: Westm. Coll. Misc. 102 (which is the correct shelf-mark) in Mann, *ibid.*, 209f., where his brother Josiah is mentioned as well; the record of evidence: TS 13 J 4 f.7, in Mann, *ibid.*, 209. The query and the responsum: TS 10 J 22, f. 8, in Mann, *ibid.*

Abū'l-Faḍl, hurl libelous charges at the *nesī'im*. There is a description of an earthquake, and mentions of parts of a building, such as the *īwān* (a high-ceiling hall), etc. In the next letter Jalāl al-dawla describes his doings in Acre to save the property of orphans; in the continuation there is a copy of a letter to the *nāsī* Solomon b. Jesse, who was interested in going to Fustat and being involved in community issues there, in his words: to serve them and their affairs, especially to serve the *nagid*, who was David, Maimonides' grandson; there is also information about his brother, Josiah b. Jesse, who was staying in Ḥamāh together with the above mentioned Ḥisdai, who was forced to stay there, the reason being, it is implied, that he had no money for the travel, because all of it was deposited with friends in Halab, and those friends were there in jail. Solomon addresses the letter to his brother-in-law, his wife's brother, and she, and their daughter, add greetings. As for David, Maimonides' grandson, we know that Solomon b. Jesse supported him and intervened on his behalf, and, in general, was very active in the Fustat community and gave sermons there on the Sabbath.

In another letter of Jalāl al-dawla's, there is mention of Solomon's son, Jesse; shoes arrived for him via a Damascus man; Solomon, the *nāsī*, was in a provincial town, Bilbays, at the time; and the writer describes his own illnesses at length. The next letter reveals the real reason for this group's journeys, namely to raise money. In this respect they were disappointed with Fustat, and instead of money, they sated them rudely with bitterness. The Bilbays community acted no differently, they did not treat Jalāl al-dawla politely during his visit, did not arrange a *pesīqā* for him, made promises, then apologized saying that just the previous Sabbath Jalāl al-dawla's brother had been there (apparently delivering a sermon). This was apparently Josiah b. Jesse. The wives of the three brothers were in Fustat, the purpose of their going there being to bring their husbands back home, to Mosul. There is also information about the *nagid*, David, Maimonides' grandson; he inquired about the reason for Solomon b. Jesse's arrival in Fustat, Jalāl al-dawla explaining, with apologies, that he was only there to bring the wives back to Mosul. Obviously, the three brothers were in trouble, in debt up to their necks.

We also read about the brothers' desire to return to Mosul via Palestine, but this was a dangerous route from the standpoint of personal security, with looting, attacks on caravans and kidnappings. In a relatively long letter to Solomon b. Jesse, Jalāl al-dawla describes the preoccupation of the people of Fustat, especially the *nagid*, David, Maimonides' grandson, in preparing a mantle, headdresses, cushions and sheets for the *nāsī*, Solomon. The people of Alexandria, "may the entire community be blessed, long deeply and thirst to behold you, our Lord, and to kiss the dust before you, and hear your lofty and revivifying casuistry and the lesson that you will hold for your servants" etc. Clearly, Solomon b. Jesse did not budge from Egypt, not even fifteen years later. Perhaps it was caused by the state of affairs in Mosul and environs, that got worse with the Mongol advance on Iraq. On 10 January 1254, his son, Jesse, wrote to him, we do not know from where, perhaps Damascus. The gist was: a book, part of "the complete book regarding..." (the full title has not been preserved), belonging to the writer's uncle, the *nāsī* Josiah b. Jesse, which had been in the hand of a certain Abū'l-Faḍl, who died without leaving a will, and 'Amram ha-

Kohen, known as Nafīs al-dawla, wanted to buy the book; Jesse therefore asks his father to instruct him how to proceed. He adds special greetings for "his excellency the *ra'īs* R. David the great *nagid*" (Maimonides' grandson).²⁵⁸

(259) Poems in honor of JOSIAH B. JESSE were dedicated to him by an anonymous poet (perhaps Judah al-Ḥarīzī, who included a poem in honor of Josiah in his *Taḥkemoni*). Mentioned are "poems of Jews and of Assyria", meaning apparently Mosul, which is Ashūr, Assyria. Following is a verse "God afforded me this day my poem to Josiah.... to bequeath to him the position of the son of Jesse (i.e., King David) and of (King) Hezekiah". Another poem states that King David is the one who bequeathed "the crown to Josiah", and "indeed Ashūr is his eternal resting place, where there were thrones of the house of David", i.e., Ashūr, Mosul, is mentioned here, too, the poet alluding to the exilarchs and *nesī'im* residing there. Hezekiah b. Jesse is mentioned in a fragmented genealogical list, clearly indicating that he was a scion of this family, of the descendants of Jesse: Solomon, Josiah and Hōdāyā.

We have already seen above that Josiah b. Jesse was also staying in Egypt, and how a community set about hiring animals for his journey. He is indeed mentioned, as we have seen, in the letters to his brother Solomon. Al-Ḥarīzī mentions, as stated before, Josiah in one of his *maqāmas*: "behold I have seen the son of Jesse.... Josiah is his name.... Josiah the great *nāsī*, *nāsī* of the Diaspora of all Israel.... son of our great *nāsī* Jesse.... son of Jesse son of Nehemiah son of Hōdāyā grandson of Zerubavel". Also preserved in the Geniza, is a ban that Josiah b. Jesse wrote, on the intermediate days of Passover, Sel. 1546, around 10 March 1235.

HŌDĀYĀ B. JESSE is mentioned in a letter of Joseph b. Gershom, a Frenchman who was appointed *dayyān* in Alexandria, to Abraham Maimonides' son, and he is mentioned in a responsum of Abraham's to queries at the end of that same letter. Joseph argued against Hōdāyā, that he sought to aggrandize to himself authority that was not coming to him, and that he rudely slandered Joseph and all the French, and aggrandized the authority to cast a ban according to "whoever is banned by the *nāsī* is banned by all of Israel" (BT, *Mō'ed qāṭān*, 17a); he had even demanded that the Alexandria community give him ten dinars to annul the ban they had placed upon themselves, after which they paid him eight dinars and refused to hand over the remaining two dinars. Abraham responded at length, expressing sorrow that Hōdāyā "would not leave this country peacefully and with honor as many and distinguished people had done before him". Hōdāyā "is an elderly man who made a name for himself in his country, and was raised among the wise, and who has wisdom and

²⁵⁸ The building in Mosul, the Mongols: 93; Acre, Hisdai: 94; the false charge: 95; Acre-Fustat: 96, where Menahem and his sons, Joseph and Isaac, are mentioned, who are also mentioned in the memorial list TS 8 K 22, f. 6, in Mann, *Jews*, II, 319. The intervention in favor of David Maimonides' grandson: TS 10 J 16, f. 12, ed. Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 34(1964/5), 237f., and see his comments *ibid.*, 238-240. Solomon the *nāsī*'s sermon: TS 6 J 7, f. 3, ed. Goitein, *ibid.*, 240ff., and see there in continuation his notes and comments. Solomon in Bilbays and the frustration in Fustat: 97, 98. Palestinian matters: 99. Garments, Alexandria: 100; cf. Goitein in the *Braslavi Jub. Vol.*, 486ff.; the letter of Jesse b. Solomon: 101.

understanding". Yet Abraham was totally averse to his behavior and his views, but nonetheless admonishes the Alexandria *dayyān* to act with restraint and tolerance.

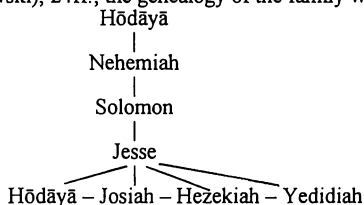
The Geniza preserves an anonymous letter to Hōdāyā b. Jesse. It is written in a florid style, and among other things mentions the arrival of "our brother our Lord the great prince". The community at the writer's location decided that "...we will not come empty handed, and according to our ability will present a gift.... we did as much as we could, yet not commensurate with the merits of our prince".

At about the same time, the name of a *nāsī* by the name of YEDIDIAH B. JESSE is mentioned, who, according to his genealogy, was an eleventh generation descendant of Josiah (David's brother) b. Zakkai, who was exilarch (a rival of his brother David) in the first half of the tenth century (above, sec. 144).²⁵⁹

(260) For about 250 years, from the first half of the thirteenth century, there is little, and even that, unclear information about the exilarchic dynasty. A disputation (was it public?) between an anonymous exilarch and two Christians, one of them a monk, that took place in Marw in Khurāsān, has been preserved in a manuscript written in 1336; but it appears that the disputation had taken place some generations before.

We learn about the status of the Baghdad exilarch, SAMUEL B. DAVID, after the Mongol invasion of the city, from the letter of argumentation of Jacob b. Elia (as it should be read) of Valencia to the apostate Pablo

²⁵⁹ The meaning of the cited verse is uncertain; possibly the word *benō* should be taken to mean: son of (not: his son), as sometimes appears in the Bible, the intention being: son of Jesse, i.e. King David; so also: King Hezekiah, obviously stressing the Davidian descent of the exilarchs (in the Hebrew version of this book I interpreted it differently). The poems: Mosseri, IV, 209.1, ed. Schirmann, *Shīrīm*, 130ff. (that should be added in the Mosseri *Catalogue*, 97; previous shelf-mark: P217). The other poems: TS H 10 f. 9 (which is the correct shelf-mark), ed. Elbogen, *MGWJ*, 76 (1932), 336ff.; the genealogy suggested by him is not correct, since the first one mentioned there, in the genealogical list, pp. 335f., Josiah, is the brother of David b. Zakkai, who lived before the middle of the tenth century. The poems in praise of Josiah were edited again by Stern, *JQR*, NS 50 (1959/60), 274ff. He was not aware of Elbogen's publication (which had a wrong shelf-mark). See the memorial list with the preserved part of the genealogy: TS NS 202.73, and I thank Prof. E. Fleischer for calling my attention to it. Josiah b. Jesse is mentioned in the letters: 93, 96, 101. See al-Harizi, *Tahkemoni* (ed. Toporowski), 24ff.; the genealogy of the family would be:



cf. the genealogy in Mann, *Jews*, II, 359, which is different in some details. (Also the genealogy in the Hebrew version of this book is different.) The ban: TS Box K 6, f. 152 (which is the correct shelf-mark), cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 123; Mann, *Jews*, I, 176; II, 210. Joseph b. Gershom: Abraham Maimuni, *Resp.* (ed. Freimann-Goitein), 13ff., see Goitein's comment *ibid.*, 13 n. 3, on Joseph b. Gershom; the responsa are dated to Sel. 1545, i.e. 1234, see *ibid.*, n. 1. See also: Simonsen, *J. Guttmann Festschr.*, 218ff.; Mann, *Jews*, I, 175f.; II, 370f.; *Texts*, I, 398ff.; *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 29, 32. The letter to Hōdāyā: TS 20.15, see it in Mann, *Texts*, 408f. See the genealogy of Yedidiah b. Jesse: Coronel, *5 Qunṭr.*, 110a.

Christiani. Jacob describes the situation in Baghdad before the Mongol invasion, when Caliph al-Mustaʿsim refused to release the money needed for the defense of the city, but did approve of wringing it out of the Jews, after extremist Muslims claimed that “the head of the yeshiva has plenty, wants for nothing, has plenty of meat, always eats the delicacies he craves, has silver and gold.... and by transferring the possessions of the exilarch and the capital and wealth of their religion’s adherents you can enrich your ministers and waylay your enemies”. Salvation came to the Jews of Baghdad from the Tatars, “and our Lord the exilarch, our Master Samuel of the house of David, the cornerstone, is among those received by the king and who sit in the foremost kingship”. This was, therefore, a precedent for preserving the status of the exilarch in the new regime. Yet, as stated above, from here on in the information becomes more and more sparse. In Iyar, Sel. 1599, April 1288, “DAVID exilarch of the all the diasporas of Israel, B. DANIEL”, wrote a letter against Solomon the Small (*Petit*) b. Samuel, of Acre, who disputed Maimonides’ “Guide for the Perplexed”. David the exilarch was a fifth generation descendant of Zakkai (brother of Daniel) b. ʿAzariah, this is the Zakkai that we know something about from the letters of his brother Daniel, who was the Palestinian gaon in the second half of the eleventh century. The letter by David the exilarch was written in Mosul: “in the external fortress, in the city of Ashūr, situated on the river Tigris”. The exilarch threatened to ban Samuel the Small, if he did not discontinue his present path. A year later, in June or July 1289, the *nāsī* Jesse b. Hezekiah did indeed issue a ban against Samuel the Small, in Damascus, and all the Jews were ordered to hand in any anti-Maimonidean writings to David, Maimonides’ grandson, within three days.

David b. Daniel’s successor as exilarch was DANIEL B. DAVID. The chronicler Ibn al-Fuwaṭī tells us about him: that “Muwaffaq al-dawla Dāniyāl b. Dawūd b. Zakkai b. ʿAzariyā al-Isrāʾīlī the exilarch has a genealogy going directly back to Daʿūd b. Jesse, I copied it from him in Tabriz in the year 706 (AD 1306/7) and they still maintain their custom as has been agreed” (with the authorities, i.e., their status was also maintained under the Mongols). It mentions another exilarch in the same place: Fakhr al-dawla Hārūn b. Yūsuf b. Daniel al-Daʿūdī (i.e., of the dynasty of King David).

In 1341, mentioned in Baghdad is ʿAzariah b. Yehalalēl b. ʿAzariah, *nāsī*, who copied a poem in honor of the *nāsī* Sar Shālōm b. Pinḥās b. Hōḏāyā b. Josiah. That ʿAzariah copied the text of a disputation, “an extract of studies about the three religions”, for a certain Obadiah, known as Kamāl al-dawla, i.e., ʿAbd al-Khālīq b. Jonah of Mardīn, in Adar, Sel. 1652, February-March 1341. This treatise was written by ʿIzz al-dawla Saʿd b. Maṣṣūr Ibn Kammūna (see below, sec. 276), in AH 679, AD 1280/81.

Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī tells us that:

In the year 754 (as it should be read; i.e., AD 1353), Nafīs b. Daʿūd b. ʿĀnān al-Daʿūdī arrived in al-Qāhira, for matters of position and family; the Jews gathered around him and were happy to see him; he met with the *amīr* Qublai, deputy (of the sultan), cured him of arthritis and he was healed; and he ordered that he be placed upon a mule, and was censured for so doing; he became famous for excelling in the science of medicine and knowledge of precious stones. Al-Nāṣir Ḥasan summoned him and demanded that he

convert to Islam; actually, he was not so far from it; then Abū Imāma Ibn al-Naqqāh went to him, and deliberated with him until he submitted to Islam and became known as ʿAbd al-Salām; and was granted an estate and regular payments were arranged for him, and along with him many others converted to Islam. His son, Muṭʿaṣim, returned to Tabriz and sired a son, Faṭḥ Allah; while the (other) son, Badʿ b. Nafīs, remained in al-Qāhira until his father's death (here it is cut).

Clearly, this has to do with someone related to the exilarchic dynasty, i.e., the house of David, al-Daʿūdī. As noted by Poliak, the name of his grandfather, ʿAnan, raises the possibility that a *nāsī* of the Karaites is meant; but there is no certainty. Nafīs was a physician, and it was expected of a physician that he be knowledgeable of the medical properties—as they believed—of gems. What happened here, is that the Muslims considered the conversion of a Davidic descendant of great importance, and Poliak may have been correct in assuming that acts of conversion in the exilarchic dynasty contributed to the decline in its status, until it disappeared completely. It should be noted that the family base then, was in Tabriz, Persia.

At about 1376, the *nāsī* David b. Hōdāyā issued a ban regarding Samuel of Schlettstadt, who was rabbi in Strasbourg, and was forced to flee eastwards (to Mosul?) because of the affair of Jewish informants, whom he sentenced to death. The *nāsī* declared a ban on the Strasbourg notables (so it seems) until they raised the funds to appease the men who were chasing the aforementioned Samuel. The *nāsī*, Yedidia b. Jesse, was also a signatory of that ban, and according to the genealogical lists there (that of David b. Hōdāyā was incompletely copied) it is implied that the two of them were descendants of Mosul *nesī'im*. Also mentioned in the fourteenth century is the *nāsī* Solomon b. Jesse, who copied a Torah commentary on 27 Shevat AM 5148, 6 February 1388; in the fifteenth century, at about 1471, a *nāsī* is mentioned in Ḥalab, Joseph b. Zedekiah b. Jesse b. Josiah. In Tishri, Sel. 1853, October 1511, the death of a certain b. David the *nāsī* b. Ezekiel the exilarch is mentioned; this is the last we hear of the house of David.²⁶⁰

²⁶⁰ The polemic: MS Paris (Arabic), 105, cf. Steinschneider, *Pol. u. apōlog. Lit.*, 158; Jacob b. Elia's letter: Kobak, in *Jeschurun* (Kobak), 6 (1867/8), 1ff.; see Mann, *REJ*, 82 (1926), 363ff., who discusses Jacob's identity, insisting that he was from Valencia, not from Venice; Goode, *JQR*, 31 (1940/1), 167, misunderstood the Hebrew and called him: Jacob Molentzia; Baer, *History*, I, 408 n. 2, cites Mann's opinion (Valencia, not Venice), but *ibid.*, 152, he calls him Jacob of Venice; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 121; Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 25; *Texts*, I, 229. In his review of my book, *Be-malkhūt ishm.*, in *JQR*, NS 90 (2000), 499f., Prof. J. Shatzmiller comments that Venice is right, which he is about to prove in a forthcoming article. See the letter of David the exilarch: Halberstam, *Jeschurun*, 7 (1870/71), 69f.; he re-edited it, together with the letters of the gaon Samuel ha-Kohen b. Daniel, in *Ginzē nist.* (Kobak), 3 (1871/2) 113f.; cf. Grätz *Gesch.*, VII, 167; Steinschneider, *Geschichtslit.*, I, 55; Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 52, 121-124; Mann, *Texts*, I, 243, 421, 477 n. 2; Daniel b. David: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīs*, III, 430 n. 1 (cited by the editor, from a manuscript). ʿAzariah b. Yehalalēl, see Mann, *Jews*, I, 174; II, 207f.: TS 13 J 25, f. 21; TS 13 J 10, f. 11; the polemical tract, see Steinschneider, *Pol. u. apōlog. Lit.*, 37-41, and see n. 3 on p. 39; cf. Ben Jacob, *Zion*, 15 (1950), 61f.; Nafīs: Ibn Hajar, *Durar*, 396f. (no. 1085), cf. Poliak, *Zion*, 3 (1938), 84f.; Ashtor, *Tōledōt*, I, 323f. (with details about Nafīs' descendants, from other sources); *idem*, *ibid.*, III, 152. The mule—he was made to ride on it for a procession of honor, something unusual, as the *dhimmīs* were only allowed to ride on donkeys. Ibn al-Naqqāsh, see above, sec. 169. The Bible manuscript of 1312 had belonged to that Sar Shālōm, and it says there in the colophon: "who was appointed by our Lord and Master Solomon the *nāsī*, exilarch of all Israel, surnamed... Nafīs al-dawla wa'l-dīn"; he

21. *The later Babylonian geonim*

(261) After Hayy Gaon's death, there was a decline in Babylonia's status in the Jewish world; the seniority then passed to the halachic learning and teaching centers established in the Maghrib, Spain, and Egypt. The distinguished spiritual scholars in these countries were those who now stamped their seal in the Jewish world; Nissim b. Jacob, Ḥananel b. Ḥushiel, Joseph Ibn Abī Tūr, Ḥanōkh b. Moses, Maimonides, his son Abraham—they and people of their circles shaped the spiritual life and the *halākhā*, influencing the Diaspora Jewish communities, while Babylonia declined; in Western Europe, as well, new centers developed, and there were outstanding figures: R. Gershom Light of the Exile, Rashi, and their contemporaries and students. Nevertheless, Babylonia did develop local leaders, maintainers of the traditions of Pumbedita and of Sura, about whom we know, beginning with the second half of the eleventh century, and in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. Most of the information comes from Geniza fragments, though there are also some literary sources and even some echoes in the Arab chroniclers. In all events, what had seemed at first as being completely snuffed out is actually a still-burning ember, one that even gives out light; beyond doubt the scholar who gathered the information about that period of decline, brought about a kind of turnabout in the views; it was Poznanski, who, in 1914, published his book with that very unique title of: *Babylonische Geonim im nachgaonäischen Zeitalter* (The Babylonian Geonim in the Post-Geonic Period). Also, much of the information about the later exilarchs, which I surveyed in the previous chapter, is found in this book; certainly salient is the fact that despite the respectable additions added by some students, Mann, Assaf and others, and some documents added from the Geniza, the main foundation for this discussion is still this book of Poznanski's; likewise regarding the later geonim and their yeshiva, that of Baghdad. Actually, there is no doubt that the persevering duality, of the activities of the two Babylonian yeshivot, Pumbedita and Sura, had ceased, now there was one yeshiva, despite occasional hints as though there were still two centers in this late period.

was the son of Pinḥās b. Josiah b. Judah b. Solomon the *nāsī*, b. Zakkai"; see Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 124 n.3. Mentioned there are also four sons of Sar Shālōm: Melkizedek, Pinḥās, Hezekiah, Josiah (above, sec. 76). See the writ of the ban by David b. Hōdāyā, in Coronel, *5 qunṭr.*, 107bf.; see the details on Samuel of Schlettstadt: Grätz, *Gesch.*, VIII, 12-14; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 119, 124; Mann, *Poznanski Mem. Vol.*, 25; *idem*, *Jews*, I, 176; Ben Jacob, *Zion*, 15 (1950), 62. The assumption that the genealogy of David b. Hōdāyā goes back to the *nesī'im* of antiquity is baseless. 1388, 1471, see: Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 125; 1511; Steinschneider, *ZfjhB*, 6(1902), 158, citing an unidentified manuscript from the Firkovich Collection.

A source for events after the death of Hayy Gaon, is Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's *Book of Tradition*; we have seen how it spread the erroneous notion that the exilarch Hezekiah b. David was made gaon of Pumbedita; there is in it further information, one more likely, concerning ISAAC B. MOSES, "the famous b. Sukkarī", who came from Dāniya in Spain, then went to "the country of the east, there to be ordained gaon, and he sat in the seat of our Master Hayy of blessed memory"; "we have also learned that he did not stay there and remained to teach in all the land of Shinar". This means that if not for the Spanish scholar it would have been the end of Babylonian scholarship. Poznanski expressed the opinion that this took place around the year 1070. Mann considered Abraham Ibn Da'ūd's statement to be somewhat of an exaggeration, meant to laud, as was his wont, the importance of Spanish scholarship. In all events, we have no information regarding this Isaac b. Moses, neither in Abraham Ibn Da'ūd or any other source.

In a letter written by Labrāṭ b. Moses b. Sughmār, from Sūsa, in the Maghrib, to his brother Judah in Alexandria, in the summer of 1056, the writer presents the severe warnings that had arrived from the head of the Babylonian yeshiva (his identity is not known, neither which yeshiva) regarding monies meant for the yeshivot, and a demand that a ban be declared against whoever did not act properly (so it is implied) in this matter. The interesting point is that he writes about the yeshivot, in the plural. The Palestinian gaon, Abiathar ha-Kohen b. Elijah, writing in the summer of 1091, to Baghdad, mentions at the head of his letter, in sentences only partially preserved and in need of reconstruction, the scholars of Mātā Maḥsiya and Pumbedita, and it may perhaps be surmised from this damaged text that there were still the two yeshivot in Baghdad at the end of the eleventh century. We have seen (above, sec. 222) the matters regarding ʿAzariah ha-Kohen b. Israel b. Samuel b. Hophni, and Isaac, the last Sura geonim we know of.

From here on utter silence reigns in the sources, until Benjamin of Tudela's story of the person he refers to as David al-Rō'ī, i.e., Menahem b. Solomon b. Rūgī (above, secs. 247-248). Benjamin says of him that he studied with "the exilarch Ḥisdai and with Eli (as it should be read) head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* in the city of Baghdad"; since Ḥisdai is mentioned there as exilarch, as we have seen, before 1120, we should gather that the person who apparently was his contemporary, Eli (the father of Samuel, about whom we shall be speaking below), was also gaon, for an unknown period of time, in the first quarter of the twelfth century. His son, Samuel, refers to himself as "Samuel ha-Levi head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora b. Eli head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, may the memory of the righteous be blessed"—this is what he used to write at the beginning of his letters. According to Samuel b. Eli, the scholars of the communities, such as Baruch b. Isaac, of Ḥalab, and other scholars of that city, turned to him in their letters "and their queries would come before our Lord, our father Eli head of the yeshiva, may the memory of the righteous be blessed".

The name of the following gaon was SOLOMON, whose gaonate was between those of Eli and Samuel b. Eli, the proof being that it was not Eli who ordained his son Samuel, but he became gaon "with the ordination.... of Solomon head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*", which we read in one of

the letters of Samuel b. Eli, after he explained that this was "the custom of the heads of the Babylonian yeshivot from the time of our Master Rav until this very day.... there is no head except someone who received his authority and greatness from the preceding head". In a letter of Solomon's, written in Adar, Sel. 1463, February 1152, to a community the details of which have not been preserved, there is an intervention in matters of the community, where a person by the name of Aaron has been banned, and there is an expression of sorrow and censure that the teacher She'altiel, "known as Khalaf, son of the dear teacher Master David", had joined the party of this banned person. It appears that the main reason for this factional organizing was the revolt against the rule of the local *dayyān*, "our student.... Daniel *alūf* of the yeshiva", and there had clearly been a controversy regarding the order by which ritual slaughter was carried out: Solomon Gaon demanded that "Abū 'Alī be appointed butcher of the lower market". There is also a fragment of a letter to a certain al-Ṣafī, a resident of Hamadān in Persia, with condolences for the death of a person close to him, and it appears that the copier refrained from copying the rest, adding a note: "and the rest is (written) in Persian". Assaf published responsa of Solomon Gaon: one of them rules that a partner's orphans not owe anything to the other partners; the second one deals with the laws regarding the burial of someone who died on a festival (whether the assistance of gentiles should be sought for the burial), and also the manner in which the date should be written on a deed in "a new month with two first days". From what has been said until now, the only dated evidence of Solomon Gaon is from 1152, and we do not know the parameters of the period of his gaonate; by way of supposition, it may be said that it was from about 1130 to 1160.²⁶¹

(262) The central figure among the period's geonim was SAMUEL B. ELI; this centrality may very well be based on an illusion, for many sources regarding him have been preserved. Benjamin of Tudela and Petahiah of

²⁶¹ See Ibn Da'ud, *Book of Trad.*, 61; G. Cohen, the editor, preferred to call him: b. Sakri, although he was aware of Steinschneider's opinion that it is b. Sukkarī (a very well-known name in that period), see the English part, 82; cf. Poznanski, *REJ*, 65 (1913), 312ff.; *idem*, *Bab. Geon.*, 6f.; Mann, *Texts*, I, 207 and n. 10. Abiathar's letter: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 372 (no. 553, b, lines 4-5). The letter of Labrāī b. Moses: 613, a, line 20ff.; cf. Mann, *ibid.*, 205, who understood some details in the letter in a different way. The studies with Eli: Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 51; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 12: Eli *rōsh yeshivā shelgōlā*, see 77, 78, 79, 80. See on Eli Gaon: Poznanski, *ibid.*, 12-15. Samuel b. Eli on his father: in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, I (2; 1929/30), 61. Cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 211ff.; see there versions of Benjamin of Tudela saying that "the sultan of Persia" asked the caliph to urge "David al-Rō'i" through the intermediary "of the exilarch and the heads of the yeshivot" (to repent); in the Adler edition the version is: "the head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora... and the head of the yeshiva *ge'on ya'aqōv*", but further down, p. 53, only "the exilarch and the head of the yeshiva *ge'on ya'aqōv*" are mentioned. Is there in this proof of two yeshivot in Baghdad (that inherited Sura and Pumbedita)? This is very much in doubt. See also Abramson, *Kiryat sefer*, 26 (1950), 93f.; the appointment of Samuel b. Eli: in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, I (2, 1929/30), 82 and *ibid.* (part 1), 106; the letters of Solomon: *ibid.* (part 3), 21ff., and see the corrections by Mann, *Texts*, I, 212 n. 22. We do not know with any certainty Solomon Gaon father's name; Assaf assumed, according to his reading, that his name was Samuel, but Mann, *ibid.*, 214 (referring to Assaf, *ibid.*, part 2, 72), has shown that the letter is not Solomon's, but 'Azariah's i.e., the son-in-law of Samuel b. Eli, as we shall see below. Assaf, *Mi-sifr. ha-g.*, (1933), 162 n. 7, accepted that he was mistaken. The responsa of Solomon: in Assaf, *ibid.*, 170.

Regensburg mention him; a quire containing many of his letters has been preserved in the Geniza, in the Firkovich collection in St. Petersburg, and was published by Assaf in 1930; others of his letters are included in my collection. He is mentioned in the letters of Maimonides, because there was a controversy between them.

Benjamin of Tudela tells us that there were ten yeshivot in Baghdad, and lists their heads. There is apparently a basic distortion in this description, and it cannot be determined whether the source of the distortion is Benjamin, himself, or later editors and copiers. According to the description of those called by him "heads of yeshivot", it appears that these were the people who sat in the first row of the yeshiva, the row of the *alūfīm*, a description used by Nathan the Babylonian. "The head of the great yeshiva" was "Samuel b. Eli, head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*", who was a Levite (so the corrupted source should be understood), "and his lineage goes back to our Master Moses, may he rest in peace"; his brother, Hananiah ha-Levi, was the *seḡan* (deputy head) of the yeshiva (so it should be understood); he also lists: Daniel *yesōd* (the foundation) of the yeshiva; Eleazar, *he-ḥāvēr* (the scholar); Eleazar b. Ṣemah *rōsh ha-seder*, whose lineage reached back to the Prophet Samuel; Ḥisdai *pe'er* (the glory) of the *ḥavērim* (the scholars); Haggai the *nāsī* (apparently, a member of the exilarchic dynasty, seeing as he is referred to as *nāsī*); Ezra *rōsh (ha-seder?) yesōd* (foundation; *sōd* is written in the source) of the yeshiva; Abū Ṭāhir Abraham; Zakkai b. Bustānī the *nāsī* (another member of the exilarchic dynasty, the name Bustānī is in doubt; the source may say, of the seed of Bustanai), "who was *ba'al ha-siyūm*". The status of these figures becomes even clearer by his definition of them as the "ten *baḏlānīm*" ('idlers') i.e., whose occupation is the study of Torah, who only deal with "the needs of the public", and who are *dayyānīm*: "they adjudicate for all of the country's Jews".

More information may be gleaned on some of these figures. Daniel may have been the son of Saadia the Babylonian, the student of Samuel b. Eli mentioned in responsa of Abraham Maimonides' son, and who will be mentioned below. It maybe that he was Daniel, *seḡan* of the yeshiva, mentioned by Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian. It says of Zakkai b. Bustānī, that he was *ba'al ha-siyūm*; I have already dealt with the meaning of the *sāyōmīn* (above, sec. 95), and he may have been the head of teaching at the yeshiva, or a kind of scribe and secretary. Titles, such as *ḥāvēr*, *pe'er ha-ḥavērim*, *yesōd ha-yeshivā*—are the kind of titles of honor often found in the Palestinian yeshivot, also in the yeshivot of Babylonia, and we know that they were not only granted to serious scholars, but also to wealthy people who regularly supported the yeshiva.

If we now turn to Petahiah's *sibbūv*, we see that he mentions "Samuel b. Eli head of the yeshiva", noting his wisdom and deep knowledge "in the written and oral Torah and all of the wisdom of Egypt (perhaps meaning: astrology).... and all the versions of the Talmud". He is the central figure, with the exilarch subordinate to him. His lineage harks back to the prophet Samuel (which Benjamin ascribes to Eleazar b. Ṣemah, whereas Samuel b. Eli's lineage extends back to our Master Moses). He also knows that he had no sons, only one daughter who was very learned, and who taught *miqrā* (*ha-qeriyya*, Scripture) to "boys through the window", while sequestered in

her home. The head of the yeshiva, Samuel b. Eli, has the authority to appoint *dayyānīm* and authority in all countries, even in Palestine, "and they all hold him in awe". He has "about 60 slaves serving him and ruling the people with sticks". By virtue of his recommendation ("he granted.... a writ and its seal") to Petahiah, so it seems, he was able to visit the many places he reached in his journeys. He notes that students come to study with him even "from the land of Egypt". He had even ordained Ezra (ha-Kohen b. Abraham) as head of the yeshiva in Damascus, this is the Ezra referred to as "Ezra the poor, the small, head of the yeshiva of *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* son of Master Abraham", in a letter from Ḥalab written in 1172; Samuel b. Eli, writing to the Damascus community (Ḥadrakh, as it should be) mentions him: "our Lord and Master Ezra, head of the yeshiva of the Desired Land" (Palestine), and his brother: "our Master Sar Shālōm chief judge of the Court", who are the sons of "Abraham head of the yeshiva of *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*", who are "of the root of steadfast geonim deriving from the family of steadfast *kōhanīm*", meaning the geonim of the Palestinian yeshiva, descendants of Solomon ha-Kohen b. Joseph.

Samuel b. Eli's Arabic nickname was: Ibn al-Dastūr; *dastūr*, a Persian loan word, had many meanings; apparently it was used in the sense of to judge, or of Torah, which was perhaps the intention of his contemporaries who so referred to him; yet al-Dastūr may have been the nickname of his father Eli. The first dated document of Samuel, is a responsum regarding the blessing over a meal; the query was sent on Marheshwan, Sel. 1476, October-November 1164, and the responsum on Iyar, Sel. 1477, April 1166. It has been estimated that the period of Samuel b. Eli's tenure ended, i.e., that he died, before Adar II, Sel. 1505, March 1194, for from this time there are already two letters signed by his successor, Zechariah b. Berakhel; this also shows that the last of Samuel b. Eli's letters to be preserved was from Tishri, Sel. 1505, September 1193. Yet we have a fragment of a copy of a writ of appointment for beadles of the Ezra the Scribe synagogue, with a writ of appointment issued by Samuel b. Eli, from Iyar, Sel. 1508, May 1197. One may summarize by saying that Samuel b. Eli was at the head of the Babylonian yeshiva about forty years, from about 1160 to about 1200. The letters of Zechariah b. Berakhel, dated before 1197, are entitled "Zechariah head of the yeshiva of *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*" etc., but it seems that the title was written by the copier, since we have seen that Samuel b. Eli was still active in 1197.

Aside from his aforementioned scholarly daughter, Samuel b. Eli, in one of his letters, mentions "our brother Master Ḥananiah *seḡan* of the yeshiva". This Ḥananiah b. Eli is mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, who refers to him as "head of the second yeshiva", the result of a misunderstanding of Benjamin's regarding the order in the Baghdad yeshiva, as we have seen above. The gaon mentions him: "our brother the *seḡan* of the yeshiva", in a number of his letters.²⁶²

²⁶² See Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 38f., and see the editor's note 30, on p. 38. See comments on the identity of the yeshiva personages mentioned by Benjamin: Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 15-19. See there his doubts concerning the identity of Daniel; see Eleazar b. Jacob, 55 (no. 166); Petahiah, 8-12, 22, 25, 28. Egyptian knowledge: in the continuation he mentions "knowledge of the zodiacs". Ezra, in Benjamin of Tudela, 31, he is 'Azariah: "the head of the yeshiva of Palestine" (part of this yeshiva stayed on in Damascus while the other

(263) As previously stated, the Firkovich collection at St. Petersburg contains the large corpus of letters of Samuel b. Eli and some of his contemporaries. These are two manuscripts. One of thirty-two sheets, with copies and fragments of copies of about thirty letters. The other manuscript has about ten letters. These are letters, some of which are indeed by Samuel b. Eli, but many of them are not his. Except for some forty letters, published by Assaf, my collection contains another ten letters and fragments of his letters from the Geniza, in addition to the writ of appointment of the Ezra the Scribe synagogue beadles, that I have mentioned above. Among the letters in my collection are: a fragment of the peroration of a letter, of October 1166; another peroration fragment, of April 1176; the preamble to a letter to the Fustat community; a fragment of a letter to an unidentified community; four more preambles of letters; the wrapping of a quire of letters by Zechariah b. Berakhel to Samuel b. Eli.

In one letter there are instructions assuring that an orphaned female receives her fair share during the apportioning of a will. It appears that there was a complaint and that the parties litigated in an unidentified locality. The gaon rules that if anyone refused to accept the ruling, an appeal must be made to the "authority of the rulers"; apparently, at issue were three sisters, two of them married and an unmarried sister who was denied her share. The gaon ruled that she should receive the best of the property. In another letter, the gaon threatens those who do not make contributions to the yeshiva. He sent an emissary to that community, demanding that he be treated with respect "as befitting the emissaries of the yeshiva and its students and that the *rāshūyōt* (=regular payments) for the yeshiva be handed over to him and that the contributions be generous". "He who refuses and is stubborn will be judged"; on the other hand: "he who obeys the precepts of the yeshiva and does its will and gives it its due will be blessed by us". The same method of strong demands regarding those who disregard their duties to the yeshiva, and as such violate their pact and obligations, is in another letter, with the ruling that the yeshiva will continue to care for them in all conditions.

Demands and pressure on a community can also be seen in his letter to the Kuftidāgān community: "Whenever our emissary comes to them, they impose upon themselves an insignificant sum, ...whereas in all the Jewish communities everywhere, each person gives a donation; those who give more will receive a greater blessing, and those who give less should be ashamed and declared wicked", etc. The gaon notes that he is sending them as emissary Jacob b. Eli (to be mentioned below), "to collect among you the gift for the yeshiva".

part went to Fustat). The letter from Ḥalab: in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1. 1929/30), 104f.; Samuel b. Eli's letter to the community of Damascus: *ibid.* (part 2), 80f. The priestly geonim, see Gil, *Hist.*, 739-776. Ibn al-Dastūr: see Eleazar b. Jacob, 7. The responsum on the blessing: TS 8 G 7, f. 4 (the correct shelf-mark), ed. Mann, *Hazofeh*, 6(1921/2), 104 ff. The letter considered to be the last: no. 31 (to the people of Irbil), see in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (3. 1929/30), 32; the letters of Zechariah b. Berakhel in 1194: nos. 25, 26, in Assaf, *ibid.*, 19, 21; cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 214. The letter of appointment of 1197: 91, and see the preamble to this document. See the opinion of Mann, *Texts*, I, 224, that the letter of appointment of the year 1197, was written after the death of the gaon; "our brother the *seḡan* of the yeshiva": 77, 83.

In another letter, to an unidentified community, the gaon asks them to host on the Sabbath "Samuel b. Solomon ha-Kohen from the land of Ashkenaz", a scholar who has been forced to leave his country "due to penury". Another letter fragment contains statements about the importance of judging an issue without prejudice.

Also found is part of a notebook with seven responsa of Samuel b. Eli; in what has been preserved there is permission to use the wine of Muslims; discussed are issues pertaining to a cemetery, and the matter of tavern songs, where the opinion of Hayy Gaon is mentioned, who forbade bawdy songs; there is also a date: Marheshwan, Sel. 1496, October 1184. The gaon's writings can be identified by his opening formula: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Psalms 121:2), and the way he concludes: "He that is our God is the God of salvation" (Psalms 68:20).

Mann believed that Samuel b. Eli was the head of the yeshiva once known as Pumbedita; he asks himself, what about Sura? Assisting him in developing his views about the continuous existence of the two yeshivot, is a letter of Zechariah b. Berakhel, Samuel b. Eli's successor. In it we find: "...and now, after having arrived at our destination we arranged a meeting in the *ʿaṣārā* (synagogue) and we blessed you with a mighty blessing, completely formulated and of a permanent nature, from the Gate of the two yeshivot", etc. This view, that there were two yeshivot in Baghdad at the end of the twelfth century, explains, according to Mann, why we also find in Samuel b. Eli's time, the gaon *ʿAzariah b. Samuel*, mentioned by Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian in his *dīwān*, in dirges he composed after the death of Samuel b. Eli's daughter. On the other hand, Assaf argued that *ʿAzariah* is nothing but a scribal error and the name should be: Zechariah. Nevertheless, a gaon by the name of *ʿAzariah b. Samuel* is indeed mentioned; we find his name in the poetry of Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian, as stated before, and he is mentioned with his father's name in the letters in Assaf's collection, but Assaf read erroneously: Solomon b. Samuel, while it should be: *ʿAzariah b. Samuel* (according to Mann, agreed by Assaf) therefore the correct reading would be: "*ʿAzariah* head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, son of Master Samuel".

In summarizing his discussion, Mann lists the names of three geonim whom he believed were geonim of Sura: *ʿAzariah b. Samuel*, Zechariah b. Berakhel (about whom he admits some doubt, and that he may have been Samuel b. Eli's successor), Isaac ha-Kohen b. al-Awānī; the matter of the last two will become clear below, while the matter of *ʿAzariah b. Samuel* cannot be decided before more data is uncovered. In all events, from the following discussion it will be made clear that only one yeshiva existed then in Baghdad, and we know of its geonim from various sources, one after the other.²⁶³

²⁶³ See Assaf's articles, published in vol. 1 of *Tarbiz* (as before, the references to them contain an indication of the volume's part, as the numbering of the pages of each part was separate, and there was no continuous numbering of the volume's pages). The period in which the letters were written: 1184-1207. Apparently, the letters were collected by the scribes of the Baghdad Yeshiva, who are called in the letters: "scribes of the truth". The fact that the heads of the *yeshivot* are called in them "our Lord our Gaon", with the addition, "may his glory be exalted", or "may his crown appear", was rightly considered by Assaf to be proof of the letters having been written while these *geonim* were still alive. Samuel b.

(264) Above (sec. 255), we saw Samuel b. Eli's lengthy discussion regarding the status of the exilarchs, and how he sought to prove, that unlike the yeshiva, which has the status of our Master Moses, the exilarchs were government tools to collect poll tax and other taxes.

Clearly, this ideological controversy takes place after the death of the exilarch Daniel b. Hisdai (1175), and it appears that the statements are directed at one of the two Mosul cousins; we have no way of knowing which one was the first to assume the exilarchate. According to Mann, the beginning of the controversy was indeed in 1175, because there is a fragment from this time, with only the writer, Samuel b. Eli's details, and details of the recipient, Ezra, head of the (Palestinian) yeshiva in Damascus, and the name of the person who delivered it: Samuel b. Solomon ha-Kohen (Samuel from "the land of Ashkenaz"); and the forwarding of the letter (or a copy of it) to Šōvā of Syria, which is Ḥalab. Sixteen years later Samuel b. Eli formulated the same fundamental discussion: the exilarch vs. the leader of the yeshiva.

Eli's letters in my collection: 75-84; the letter of appointment: 91. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 36, has already assumed that Samuel b. Eli died close to 1200; see Assaf's own corrections to these articles of his: *Tarbiz*, 1 (4.1929/30), 146f.; 2 (1930/1), 120; and Mann's, *Texts*, I, 212, 224, in the notes. The orphan: 75; the demands from the community people: 76, 77. The community of Kuftidāgān: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2.1929/30), 58. See the passage from Petahiah which he cites in n. 1: "each one of the Babylonian Jews pays a gold coin (*zāhūv*, meaning: a dinar) a year, as poll tax, to the head of the yeshiva"; *ibid.* (1.), 118, Assaf points out the apparent contradiction between the wealth ascribed by Petahiah in his *Sibbūv* to the head of the yeshiva (60 slaves, costly garments), and what we find in Samuel b. Eli's letters, on the distress in the yeshiva, the burdens of interest, etc. "Any prop and support has broken down... nevertheless, while in distress, we busy ourselves with the Torah". See *ibid.*, 2, 61. Obviously, the complaints by the heads of the yeshivot (which we read in most of their letters) sometimes corresponded to the harsh conditions prevailing then, but sometimes should be taken with a grain of salt. Samuel of the land of Ashkenaz: 83. Against partiality: 81. The responsum: TS 8 G 7, f. 5 (which is the correct shelf-mark), summarized by Mann, *Hazofeh*, 6 (1921/2), 109. Aptowitz, *ZfHB*, 19 (1916), 36f., ascribed a responsum regarding leavened food (*ḥamēš*), referring to BT *Pes.*, 30a, to Samuel b. Eli, based on *Sefer ha-rōqeah* no. 451: "thus was the evidence by our Master Samuel, head of the yeshiva in Babylonia", cf. *Hagā'ot maymōniyot* to Maimonides' *Code*, *hilekhōt* (*ḥamēš u-maššā*, i.6, and other places as well, where the version is: "it was announced from Babylonia that there are old books", or similar versions, see *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Pesaḥim*, 23; and still one may doubt whether Samuel b. Eli is the "Samuel head of the yeshiva" mentioned there; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 135f. (referring to what he wrote there on p. 40, concerning Daniel b. Eleazar, who was gaon at the beginning of the thirteenth century, see below sec. 267). In the responsa of Meir of Rothenburg (the Maharam), 64 (no. 494), there is a citation of a responsum by Samuel b. Eli, "head of the yeshiva, from Babylonia", to Moses of Qī'w (! Kiev?) concerning a "rebellious woman"; see the text of the responsum as edited by Poznanski from a Bodleian manuscript: *Bab. Geon.*, 54-56, and see his comment *ibid.*, 22f.; this is also said to be from Samuel b. Eli to Moses of Kiev (?), concerning the problem of *yibbūm* or *ḥaliṣa*, cf. *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Yevāmōt*, 79 (no. 178). See also A. Epstein, *Talm. Lex.* (Sonderabdr.), 25-28, who edits another version of this responsum from another Bodleian manuscript; cf. Harkavy, *Had. gam yesh.* (reprint), 152f. The letter of Zechariah b. Berakhel (1184): in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (3.1929/30), 18, and see Mann's corrections, in *Texts*, I, 217, n.37. See Eleazar b. Jacob ha-Bavli, 13: "and his son-in-law and pupil, (like) born in his house, father of a clan, the family of the head of the yeshiva 'Azariah, *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*"; *ibid.*, 15: "and also, she married the *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* 'Azariah, who all his sayings are beautiful", etc. Solomon-'Azariah, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1(2.1929/30), 72, 82, and see the matter of the correction above, note 261. Mann devoted a whole sub-chapter to the later geonim, see: *Texts*, I, 210-228, and see *ibid.*, 227, the table of the geonim. See Assaf's answer, in *Tarbiz*, 3 (1931/2), 342f.

The worldly sides in the controversy were contained in the influence and authority of the exilarch, on the one hand, and those of the head of the Babylonian yeshiva, on the other, over the centers in Syria and in Egypt. Here belongs also the issue of the appointment of Nethanel ha-Levi b. Moses, of Fustat, decided by Daniel b. Hisdai, as we have seen (above, sec. 254), and, on the other hand, the close ties between Samuel b. Eli and the Palestinian yeshiva in Damascus, headed by Ezra b. Abraham. The exilarch, Daniel b. Hisdai, vigorously opposed granting any authority regarding ordination in Egypt to the inheritor of the Palestinian yeshiva, the yeshiva in Damascus. Samuel b. Eli's emissary to the northern Syrian communities, whose mission was to persuade them to accept the views of the Babylonian yeshiva and not those of the new exilarch, apparently a resident of Mosul, was the son-in-law of the gaon, Zechariah b. Berakhel, who lived in Ḥalab; he was apparently the person for whom that letter, whose contents have not been preserved, and which was supposed to reach Aleppo, was meant, and about which I have written above. An interesting fact that should be noticed, is that Petahiah of Regensburg, who arrived in Baghdad in 1176, after the death of Daniel b. Hisdai, already noted the new reality where the more important status was that of the head of the yeshiva, who had the authority to appoint *dayyānīm* "in all the land of Ashūr and Damascus and the cities of Persia and Media and the land of Babylonia", as well as Palestine. Significantly, Petahiah did not mention Egypt, and on the other hand there is a clue about the Palestinian yeshiva's authority over the diaspora communities that were now regarded as belonging to the head of the Babylonian yeshiva; for Palestine was then under Crusader rule and had no Jewish community, and the Palestinian yeshiva was not reinstated there even after Saladin's conquest of Palestine. This was the view of the head of the Babylonian yeshiva; but the exilarch, as seen in the above letter of his regarding Nethanel b. Moses, had the opposite view, for the Davidic dynasty was above all of them.²⁶⁴

(265) A deferential attitude towards the exilarchs was characteristic of Maimonides. Above (sec. 255) we saw how he wrote about the manner in which he received a letter of the exilarch, and how he read it to an audience, while he and the entire assembly stood on their feet. On the other hand, and as could probably be expected, a rivalry developed between Maimonides and the Babylonian yeshiva and its leaders, first Samuel b. Eli, then Zechariah b. Berakhel. We shall see that the challenge to the exilarchs was the primary motive for the outbreak of that rivalry between

²⁶⁴ See the text of Samuel b. Eli in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, I (1929/30), 62-70, in a letter of 1191; one has to notice that in saying: *manšib al-yeshivā... al-nā'ib 'an moshē rabbēnū* ("the position of the yeshiva... [is like of] a substitute for Moses"), he means the head of the yeshiva, which they often meant when saying yeshiva, i.e. the gaon is the substitute for Moses. In this, he was even moderate when compared with the priestly geonim of Palestine, who sometimes called themselves "the gaon of God" (i.e., appointed by God), see, for instance, Elijah ha-Kohen b. Solomon, in: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 22 (no. 422), 24 (no. 424). We find a similar tendency in Islam, with the Umayyads and also the Abbasids, who called themselves *khalīfat allāh*, or *nā'ib allāh*, the substitutes for God, like Peter and the popes in Christianity (the *vicarius*), see an exhaustive discussion on this topic by Crone and Hinds, in their *God's Caliph*. The earlier intention in Islam was that they considered themselves to be substitutes or successors of the Prophet. The fragment of 1175: in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, I (3.1929/30), 77; see the discussion in Mann, *Texts*, I, 228-243.

Maimonides and Samuel b. Eli. In his *Mishnā Commentary*, to Sanhedrin, 1:3, Maimonides asserts the exclusivity of Palestine in matters of ordination, adopting an absolutely theoretical stance, for at that time there was no one in Palestine who could grant ordination. Yet in his *Code*, besides his emphasis on the authority of Palestine, he adds that “the exilarchs in Babylonia are in lieu of the king”, therefore the exilarch has the authority to ordain courts of justice, to adjudicate “throughout the world”, “even though he does not rule in criminal matters”, *qenāsōt*, (*Code*, Sanhedrin 4.11-14). To this was added a negative attitude towards those with grandiose titles (see above, note 89).

In a letter to the community of Lunel in the south of France, Maimonides included Babylonia among the countries where “Torah perished from among the sons” (imitating Jer. 49:7); after noting that “most of the big cities are dead, that some are dying, and about two-three are ill”, he mentions Ḥalab as the only place where there are “some scholars who study Torah, but who are not exactly putting themselves to death in its tent”, and adds that “in all of Shinar (=Babylonia) there are three or four grains”.

Another element of the controversy is revealed to us in Maimonides’ “Letter of the Resurrection of the Dead”. There, too, he mentions those “who are called scholars, or geonim, or any other name you want to call them”, “who do not build their Torah (so it is implied) on the principles of the faith and the *halākhā*, and their learning is not organized properly”. He also mentions a letter he received in Sel. 1502, AD 1191 (the year he wrote the letter), from “some of our people” in Baghdad, where they write that a query had arrived for “that yeshiva head, our Master Samuel ha-Levi, who is now in Baghdad”, from people in Yemen regarding the resurrection of the dead. That is, they turned both to Samuel b. Eli and Maimonides. Samuel b. Eli had composed a treatise for them on this subject, and, among other things, had argued that part of Maimonides’ view was a transgression and fallacy, and part of what he writes can be forgiven and silently disregarded. Later that treatise reached Maimonides, and he deemed it full of sermonizing and legends; in our contemporary terms: worthless in terms of science and philosophy, having false arguments, and stemming from a lack of understanding. He also argues against Samuel b. Eli that he was reliant on *al-muʿtabar*, (the book of lessons) of Abūʾl-Barakāt (below, sec. 269).

Maimonides adopts an objective and matter of fact tone in his letter to Joseph Ibn ʿAqnīn on the *halākhōt* regarding the Sabbath. The pretext for the letter was a short letter he had received from Baghdad, with citations from Samuel b. Eli’s critique on some of the Sabbath *halākhōt* that Maimonides included in his *Code*. In reaction to the casual and unreasoned argument of his rival, that he was in error on some issue, Maimonides expresses his opinion that, apparently, he is considered as having erred whenever he disagrees with a gaon or a commentator. He is very happy, he goes on, and grateful to whoever checks his writings, for if he (the critic) is right, it will help him (Maimonides); or that Maimonides will prove to him that he is mistaken, which will be of help for the critic.

A special subject belonging to the Sabbath *halākhōt*, river sailing, was also a reason for the two of them to argue. We have a responsum of Maimonides on this issue to Abraham ha-Kohen of Baghdad (some wished to identify him with “Abraham, called Abū Ṭāhir head of the ninth

yeshiva", mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, but it has not been said of him that he was a *kōhēn*). Also preserved is a responsum on this matter by Samuel b. Eli. The gist of Maimonides' view is that deep water river sailing is akin to sailing upon the Mediterranean Sea, and permitted. From Samuel b. Eli's responsum we learn that Maimonides wanted his responsum shown to Samuel; Samuel disagrees with him, but prefaces his discussion with great praise for Maimonides. Maimonides returns to the issue of river sailing in his letter to Joseph Ibn Jābir; he had written to him that he, Maimonides, had been censured for permitting deep water river sailing on the Sabbath, whereupon Maimonides responds to the arguments, noting that Samuel b. Eli was very much in error, had not sufficiently delved into his statements, or understood them at all, and was quick to censure; and that he, Maimonides, had already written a responsum regarding his arguments, and that his students had already copied his responsum. Maimonides reiterates his arguments against Samuel b. Eli in his letter to Joseph Ibn 'Aqnīn, that he wrote in Marheshwan, Sel. 1502 (as it should be read), AD 1190. He especially attacks Zechariah b. Berakhel, perhaps already the yeshiva's chief judge, who considered himself singular in his generation, while he is "small as a new-born babe"; he should be forgiven, for he is stupid.²⁶⁵

(266) As we have seen, the poet Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian mentions Samuel b. Eli's son-in-law in a dirge he wrote upon the death of Samuel's daughter. According to him, "she took his son and his son-in-law and student and child, the head of the family and the family of the head of the yeshiva, 'AZARIAH *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*"; the dirge also says that 'Azariah had already died when it was written, and, as could have been expected, so had the father, Samuel. In another dirge over the same daughter, mentioned again is "*ge'on ya'aqōv* 'Azariah, all of whose words were lovely"; because many people had learned from him "he will ascend to the chair of the yeshiva". There is a lack of clarity here, but it may be concluded that according to Eleazar b. Jacob, a short while after the death of Samuel b. Eli,

²⁶⁵ The letter to Lunel: Maimonides' *Iggerōt* (ed. Shailat), 559 (in the Shailat edition there are references to earlier editions). See the letter about resurrection *ibid.*, 321, 324-326. See the tract on resurrection, of Samuel b. Eli, found in a volume owned by the National Russian Library in Moscow, that was identified by Langermann, see *Migginzē ha-mākhōn*, 146f. Rules of the Sabbath: see *Iggerōt* (above in this note), 282-284; cf. Freimann and Baneth, in *B.M. Lewin Jub. Vol.*, 29ff., who mention *inter alia* that the information received by Maimonides from Baghdad was probably written by one of his supporters in that city. See this letter also in Maimonides' *Resp.* (ed. Blau), III, 142ff. (no. 464). Abū Ṭāhir Abraham: Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 39, and the view that he was identical with Abraham ha-Kohen; Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 18. See Maimonides' answer in the *Iggerōt* (ed. Shailat), 275f., and in his *Resp.* (ed. Blau), 566-569. The Arabic version (Shailat) has: *al-baḥr al-māliḥ*, which is not "the salty sea" as said by the ancient translator, but the Mediterranean, see Gil, *Hist.*, 204, in note 77. The responsum of Samuel b. Eli, see Maimonides' *Resp.* (ed. Blau), 570-572; Maimonides' letter to Joseph b. Jābir: *Iggerōt* (ed. Shailat), 404-407. The date of Joseph Ibn 'Aqnīn's letter: see the *Iggerōt* (ed. Baneth), 33, and the editor's note, *ibid.*, 34, that the letter was sent to Baghdad, not to Halab. See the letter: *Iggerōt* (ed. Shailat), 293-299; cf. Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1929/30), 107f. See more, from the comprehensive research literature on this topic: Brüll, *JJGL*, 4 (1879), 2; Harkavy, *Had. gam Yesh.* (reprint), 232; *idem*, *ZfHB*, 2 (1897), 125; Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 24-34; Finkel, *PAAJR*, 9 (1938/9), 57ff.; Teicher, *Melilah*, 1 (1944), 81f.; Sonne, *PAAJR*, 21 (1952), 101ff.; Silver, *Maim. Crit.*, 59ff.

his son-in-law, ⁶Azariah, who was slated to become head of the yeshiva, and his wife, Samuel's daughter—the daughter who had so impressed Petahiah, the author of the *sibbuv*, had all died. Here the poet and the other sources are totally at odds; for a yeshiva head by the name of ⁶Azariah is not mentioned in this period, except by assuming that this means that Ezra, the head of the yeshiva (the Palestinian yeshiva) in Damascus is intended, who was ordained, according to Petahiah, by Samuel b. Eli, as we have seen (above, sec. 263), and he is also mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, who indeed refers to him as ⁶Azariah, the “head of the Palestinian yeshiva”. This is Ezra b. Abraham b. Mazhīr; this Ezra's father, Abū Ṭāhīr Abraham b. Mazhīr, mentioned by Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra, was the head of the Damascus yeshiva after Maṣliḥ ha-Kohen left Damascus and moved to Fustat; Abraham b. Mazhīr was apparently one of the sons-in-law of the priestly family then at the head of the Palestinian yeshiva, with breaks, from 1025.

Contrary to what has been said until this point, there is the letter published by Assaf, in a collection which is mainly the letters of Samuel b. Eli, written at an unknown date. Assaf ascribed it—by what he read at the beginning of the letter—to Solomon, whose father's name was Samuel: “Solomon, head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora, son of Master Samuel, the great *rav*, of blessed holy memory”. Yet Mann, who also read the letter in the source, read, as stated, instead of Solomon: ⁶Azariah, and Assaf even admitted that it was the correct reading. But the matter requires more examination, and if the two above scholars were not in error, it may have been a scribal error, such as what it should be is: Daniel b. Samuel (=son of Abū Rabi⁶, who will be discussed below). The letter turns to “our brethren the Jews, the holy communities in the land of Mazyadiyya”; the country of the Banū Maziyad was Hilla and its environs. Mann believed that here he would find proof of the existence of two yeshivot, and that this ⁶Azariah was poised to become the gaon of the yeshiva that was Sura's successor. The possibility also exists of there having been a split within the yeshiva, because the writer sends “greetings also from our party and the members of our yeshiva”. The writer mentions the death of his son, Samuel, while still young, and attaches a dirge in his memory. Even in the dirge he talks about those who hate him, who were haughty, and about enemies. The people of Shinar, ⁶Elam, Canaan, Šō⁶an (Babylonia, Persia, Palestine, Egypt) and Spain mourned this son. It is interesting to note that he does not mention Syria, perhaps because he, himself, lived in Damascus? Or Halab? If the person here meant was ⁶Azariah, the son-in-law of Samuel b. Eli, about whom the poet Eleazar b. Jacob composed a poem, we would have perhaps found an echo of the fact that the deceased son was the grandson, son of the daughter of this gaon, but there is no such echo; yet there are some lacunae in the manuscript.

Thus the matter of ⁶Azariah still needs further study. Beyond doubt the proven successor of Samuel b. Eli was ZECHARIAH B. BERAKHEL, of Ḥalab. Samuel b. Eli writes about him and calls him “Zechariah, chief judge of the yeshiva”. The letter is also addressed to the COMMUNITIES of Šōvā (Halab); mentioned are “the regular school for the hasty” that was in the yeshiva, and also the writer's brother: “our brother, the *seḡan* of the yeshiva”, i.e., Ḥananiah, as we have seen. In this letter we see that Samuel b. Eli refers to

Zechariah b. Berakhel as "our mighty one, light of our eyes, our son, our friend, our son-in-law". And also at the end of the letter: "our son our son-in-law". If Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian was not mistaken in referring to the son-in-law of the gaon as 'Azariah, one may conclude that Samuel b. Eli had two daughters and two sons-in-law. Also stated there is that it is Samuel b. Eli who ordained Zechariah as chief judge of the yeshiva's court. The main point of the letter is to inform the Ḥalab community of the appointment and ordination of Zechariah. The date: Tamuz, Sel. 1502, July 1191. That same letter contains interesting information about the history of his previous relations with Zechariah, namely that there was a party (whether in Baghdad or Ḥalab is not clear) of "deceitful men" who tried "to divert him from my daughter", "and to leave the yeshiva and join them, but he did not hearken unto their voice.... and he was not enticed by their silver, their gold, and their vanities".

He has a similar tiding, for the people of northern Syria and northern Iraq; along with the bitter argument with the exilarch, that I mentioned above, there is the same message, about the appointment of "our son-in-law, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.... our Master Zechariah.... son of the important elder our Lord and Master Berakhel, may his outcome be glorious" (i.e., the father, Berakhel, is meant, who was still alive). Zechariah was even preparing to travel and inspect the communities at the behest of his father-in-law. The same message is meant for the people of the Palestinian yeshiva in Damascus, led by Ezra b. Abraham, moreover, stated here is that Zechariah was the "yeshiva's intended", i.e., slated to become head of the yeshiva, Samuel b. Eli's successor. The date of this letter is I Adar, Sel. 1502, February 1191. According to Maimonides' testimony, writing to Joseph Ibn 'Aqnīn about the controversy between him and Samuel b. Eli, the gaon's (second) letter to him contained great praise for Zechariah, his great knowledge of *halākḥā*, "and the four orders of the Talmud are mastered by him"; Maimonides derisively notes that the two of them had begun adorning each other. In II Adar, Sel. 1505, March 1194, "Zechariah head of the yeshiva of *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*" writes two letters, one of them to the communities of Kuftidāgān and Sūsiyā, and the other to the al-Kurkānī community. On the face of it, the title of "head of the yeshiva" stands in contradiction to what we now know about Samuel b. Eli being still alive, even serving in his post, in 1197. One explanation may be that Samuel b. Eli had acted as had Sherira Gaon, in making his son Hayy his partner; another possible explanation is that the copying of the letters of Zechariah b. Berakhel was done after Samuel b. Eli's death, when Zechariah b. Berakhel was head of the yeshiva, and that is where the contemporary copier placed him.

The Geniza also has preserved a fragment of what was apparently the wrapping paper of a quire of letters with the authentic handwriting of "Zechariah b. Berakhel, may God guard him" (i.e., this is also proof of his father Berakhel having lived to a ripe old age, at least until the 1190s) to "his honor our Lord our majesty our glory the sun of our time and our Lord and Master Samuel ha-Levi head of the yeshiva of *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*" etc.

Zechariah was also, apparently, a poet, as testified by al-Ḥarīzī: "and the ancient eastern poets, the Master Shemariah and the head of the yeshiva Zechariah, were both of them heroes in Talmud and distinguished, fearers

of Heaven and pious, while they did not mention their poems and they hid their libel.... and the shamelessness of their poems they did not see" etc.²⁶⁶

(267) As for Zechariah b. Berakhel, as we have seen, there is no chronological point to latch onto, except for the letters he wrote dated 1194, where he is already referred to as head of the yeshiva while Samuel b. Eli was alive, and for which I have attempted above to find an explanation. In all events, it appears that Zechariah's period of gaonate, after the death of Samuel b. Eli, was a short one, beginning not earlier than 1197, and that he was succeeded by ELEAZAR B. HILLEL B. FAHD. We have a Geniza document which says that in Iyar, Sel. 1512, April-May 1201, "DANIEL HEAD OF THE YESHIVA OF THE DIASPORA SON OF MASTER ELEAZAR *HE-ḤĀSĪD*, may the memory of the righteous be blessed", appoints Abū Maṣṣūr b. Abī'l-Ḥasan, as the beadle of the Ezra the Scribe synagogue. We also have the official appointment by the caliph al-Nāṣir (March 1180-5 October 1225) of Daniel b. Eleazar, a very tardy appointment, if we are to believe Ibn al-Sā'ī: 9 Dhū'l-qā'da 605, 15 May 1209; but this is an impossible date, in light of the above Geniza document, by which Daniel b. Eleazar was already gaon in 1201. On the other hand, we find in Ibn al-Sā'ī information that in Dhū'l-ḥijja 605, June 1209, "HIBAT ALLAH B. ABĪ'L-RABĪ'Ā, HEAD OF THE YESHIVA OF THE JEWS died; he was learned in sciences and philosophy, wrote well, and was over 60 years old". From this we must conclude that Daniel b. Eleazar died somewhere between the summer of 1201 (when the aforementioned beadle was appointed) and an unknown date, before the summer of 1209. As to Hibat Allah b. Abī'l-Rabī'ā, he was the subsequent head of the yeshiva (we have no information about this Hibat Allah b. Abī'l-Rabī'ā). The gaon who succeeded Zechariah b. Berakhel, certainly at the end of the twelfth century, between 1198 and about 1200, was ELEAZAR B. HILLEL B. FAHD (neither do we have any information about this Eleazar b. Hillel, he is only mentioned in the caliph's writ of appointment of Daniel b. Eleazar).

²⁶⁶ 'Azariah, Samuel's son-in-law: Eleazar Ben Jacob, 13, lines 37-38, who earlier mentioned the "head of the yeshiva *Ge'ōn Ya'aqōv*, Samuel... one certainly weeps over his death". The grammatical subject of "it took his son (*ḥamūdō*) and his son-in-law", is: death, see line 33, as also in the following dirge: 15-16, lines 34-35; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 35. 'Azariah: see Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 31, and see the events in the Palestinian yeshiva in the twelfth century: Mann, *Texts*, I, 250-257, writes references to the sources. Abū Ṭāhir Abraham, the gaon of Damascus: see in Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra (ed. Schmelzer), the editor's preface. The letter ascribed to Solomon or to 'Azariah, see above, n. 261. See Mann's view about the two yeshivot, already mentioned above: *Texts*, I, 221 n.46; 233 n.71, "greetings from our circle": Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2.1919/30), 73; the 'enemies' *ibid.*, 76. The letter to Zecharia and to Ḥalab: Assaf, *ibid.*, 58f.; the heading of the letter says that it was written by Samuel b. Eli and Zechariah b. Berakhel together; apparently Zechariah wrote what the gaon dictated, as noticed by Mann, *Texts*, I, 220 n. 43; what is written in Assaf, *ibid.*, line 11, should be understood: "from here on it was written by Samuel b. Eli", and after line 14 it says: "unto here", meaning: written in the gaon's own hand; in line 8 it says: "he married our daughter"; in lines 62-63: "to the northern communities"; *ibid.*, lines 80ff.: to Damascus. The evidence of Maimonides: *Iggerōt* (ed. Shailat), 296; Zechariah b. Berakhel's letters: Assaf, *ibid.*, part 3, 17ff.; cf. the comment of Assaf, *ibid.*, part 1, 106-109; he understood it differently from what I wrote here. The Geniza fragment: 84. As a poet: al-Ḥarīzī, *Ṭaḥkemonī*, 195, cf. Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (1.1929/30), 111, who understood the verses to say: he was a poet, but not a very successful one. See also Mann, *Texts*, I, 219f.

In the chapter on the exilarchate (above, sec. 68) I already mentioned the tradition whereby the Muslim ruler appoints the person considered to be the head of the Jews; we have no document of this kind regarding the appointment of the exilarch, but there is one, issued by the Fatimid ruler, about the appointment in the Palestinian yeshiva, and for the period currently being discussed, we have the appointment of DANIEL B. ELEAZAR. The writ of appointment begins, as usual, with praises to God; then with the application of "Daniel b. Eleazar b. Hibat Allah" to be appointed *ra's mathībat al-yahūd* (head of the yeshiva of the Jews), in the place of "Al'āzar b. Hilāl b. Fahd". Since the nature of his good behavior towards his community and his honorable views were known, the caliph (with the usual descriptions and flowery language regarding the caliphs) decided to appoint him as requested, as had also been accepted regarding the (former) head of the yeshiva, Ibn Dastūr (i.e., Samuel b. Eli). Further down there is recognition of the status of the leadership being granted to him, and authorization to wear the special frock of leaders of his kind; stated is that all the Jews of Baghdad and Iraq are obligated to obey him and make the accepted payments due to him as has been customary. This is clearly a shortened formula, absent is the detailing of his prerogatives, that we have seen in other writs of appointment of this kind. From the fact that Samuel b. Eli is the person mentioned as a predecessor of Daniel b. Eleazar, we may conclude that Zechariah b. Berakhel died not long after Samuel b. Eli, before even managing to obtain an official appointment by the caliph. It appears that something similar also happened to Eleazar b. Hillel b. Fahd.

In the collection published by Assaf, there are no less than 15 letters written by Daniel b. Eleazar. According to the order of their dates, they were written at the following times: I Adar, Sel. 1516, January-February 1205, two letters: one to a certain Samuel, perhaps Samuel b. Mevorakh al-Barqūlī, to whom al-Ḥarīzī dedicated his *Taḥkemōnī*, apparently a resident of Wāsiṭ. The letter deals with ties the man had with a certain person in his community; Samuel sought to interest him in the yeshiva. The other—of unknown address—deals with divorce. Nisan, Sel. 1517, March-April 1206, two letters: one to Yefet, trustee of the yeshiva, b. Aaron, with holiday greetings for Passover; unknown address; in the other, only metaphorical language remains; Tishri, Sel. 1518, September 1206, three letters: one to the Waqf community, with metaphorical language and blessings for the holiday; the other to a certain Tōv (as it should be read) and his two sons, Samuel(?) and Sahlān; also with flowery language and blessings for the Sukkot holiday; in the third there is mention of Abū'l-Ma'ālī b. Kammūna (a family to be discussed below), and Abū Eli b. Shibr (as it should be read), who had apparently done some service for the yeshiva; also mentioned is a certain 'Abd al-Karīm, and the subject is transfer of money for the yeshiva. Shevat, Sel. 1518, January 1207, two letters: in one, there is mention of a certain Neṣaḥ al-Ifranjī, i.e., a person from Christian Europe, about whom the gaon has complaints, and in this matter he writes to the Wāsiṭ community asking that the letter be publicly read; also mentioned there is Zechariah *reṣūy ha-ēdā*, "the desirable of the community", Ezra *segūlat ha-ēdā*, "the excellency of the community", Daniel Abū'l-Ma'ālī—*yeqīr ha-yeshivā*, "the cherished of the yeshiva" and Abū'l-Barakāt; the other letter deals with a community dispute, mentioned

there and censured is Abū Yāsir b. Tūvia, who wrote an annoying letter. The gaon intends to visit that location, one that we do not know, and here, too, that 'Ifrañj' is mentioned (this is a man by the name of Neṣaḥ, an uncommon name, and there is no certainty that it was actually a name; perhaps a nickname: *naṣḥ*, i.e., advise). The issue is similar to that of the previous letter, and it appears that they were sent at the same time. Further down, in what looks like an addendum, mentioned are: Abū'l-Ḥasan; his son, Daniel Abū'l-Ma'ālī; the brothers, Abū'l-Faḥ and Abū'l-Faraj; the brothers Petahiah and Abū Bishr, sons of Nahum. Tishri, Sel. 1519, September-October 1207, to Abū Maṣṣūr (Samuel?) b. al-Barqūlī and his son, Mevorakh, "lord of the community and trustee of the kingdom" (*thiqat al-mulk*)—and he adds some more titles; the gist of the letter is blessings for the Sukkot holiday. Elul, Sel. 1519, August-September 1208, two letters: one dealing with the intention of barring a man who had sinned (there is no detail about the sin), from the honor of leading the congregation in prayer; the gaon rules that he should not be barred, for he has repented. Tishri, Sel. 1520, September-October 1208, a Sukkot holiday blessing, to the *rayīs* Abū'l-Barakāt Elijah b. al-Širātī, "the honor of the princes", "trustee of the treasurers", "friend of the yeshiva"; the other, sent to the al-Nīl community, was also a holiday greeting. A letter, whose date has not been preserved, may be added, this one to the above Samuel b. Mevorakh al-Barqūlī, in which only some flowery phrases have been preserved.

The peroration formula of the letters, when preserved, is: "God is a refuge for us. Selah" (Psalms 62:8). Usually, there are two parts, one in Hebrew, essentially metaphors and blessings, the other, the matter at hand, in Arabic.

According to Assaf, these letters were apparently of the gaon, Eleazar b. Hillel b. Fahd; yet we have seen that Daniel b. Eleazar was already gaon in 1201; there may be a connection between the fact that the last of the letters are from the autumn of 1208, and the date of the appointment by the caliph of Daniel b. Eleazar, according to Ibn al-Sā'ī—15 May 1209; Ibn al-Sā'ī's mistake was in confusing two dates: the writ of appointment was indeed of Daniel b. Eleazar, but 15 May 1209 was—with virtual certainty—the time of his death.²⁶⁷

(268) Above I have already mentioned Ibn al-Sā'ī's information about the death of Hibat Allah (ha-Kohen?) b. Abū'l-Rabī', head of the Jews'

²⁶⁷ The writ of appointment by Daniel b. Eleazar: 91; see Ibn al-Sā'ī, 266-269, 283. Cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 36-42; on p. 36 he notes that the name Fahd was not used by Jews; however, see: Fahda (in 1026), Fahd, Fuhayd (in ca. 1093), in Gil, *Palest.*, II, no. 62, lines 10, 54; *ibid.*, III, no. 552, line 14. *Fahd* has several meanings, of several types of animals, among them: a wolf, see Dozy s.v.; therefore it might correspond to Benjamin (Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf, Gen. 49:27), i.e., that the head of the yeshiva was called Eleazar b. Hillel b. Benjamin; cf. also: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, I (1.1929/30), 109f.; Fischel, *Jews*, 128f. The letters that I described as written by Daniel b. Eleazar, are found in Assaf, *ibid.* (the letters show the part of *Tarbiz* vol. 1): c, 41; c, 46; b, 43; c, 48; b, 46; b, 47; c, 51; c, 53; c, 61; c, 44; c, 55; b, 48; c, 57; c, 58; and see his discussion on Daniel b. Eleazar, *ibid.*, 222-225. Evidently, a rumor about Daniel had reached Europe, and he is the one mentioned in Isaac b. Moses of Vienna, *Or zarū'a* (Jerusalem, 1887), *bāvā meṣā'a* no. 265, in a matter of partnership: "this is what our Lord Daniel Gaon said": also, in Ṣedāqā b. Abraham 'Anaw, *Shibbole ha-leqeṭ* (Buber), 14, no. 15: "Our Lord Daniel Gaon", regarding the number of words in the *Shema* prayer; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 40.

yeshiva, according to him, in Dhū'l-hijja AH 605, June 1209. There are two possibilities: either Ibn al-Sā'ī was mistaken, and that date is the date of the appointment of Hibat Allah; or, indeed, he stopped serving as head of the yeshiva after Daniel b. Eleazar, for a short while, and died on that date. I have already mentioned the praise heaped upon him by this chronicler.

Al-Ḥarīzī, in *Tahkemōnī*, mentions "R. ISAAC B. AL-AWĀNĪ" (as it should be read), saying: "he is very wealthy, but his poems are poor and meager, he bought the (headship of the) yeshiva with 1,000 gold pieces but somebody else is in its command.... and he writes songs spread with unripe things, the vessel is corrupted"; David Kaufmann has shown that there is word play here, for *awānī* means vessels, therefore "the vessel is corrupted". From Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian we learn that he was a *kōhēn*: "Isaac *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, an offspring of Aaron's"; "Isaac head of the sons of Šādōq, *ge'ōn ya'aqōv*, who is anointed with dear oil"; he eulogizes him: "....nothing will save a man except for his good deeds, like Isaac, while he is head of the yeshiva of *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* and the *nagid* of his *nagids*....". He also mentions his sister who "....has been while alive as a mother for the nation's orphans, caring for its remnants". We have no more details about this Isaac, and only approximate knowledge of when he lived, because he was a contemporary of Eleazar b. Jacob, and died when the poet was still alive. He may be identical with Isaac b. Asher, whom I have mentioned (above, sec. 222, note). What is written in the *Tahkemōnī* regarding "buying the headship of the yeshiva", and on the other hand, what Eleazar b. Jacob adds in his short poem about him: "he shall sit again on his seat, calm and secure forever", apparently shows that there was then a serious dispute in the Baghdad yeshiva, a dispute in which he was the central figure.

Information about the gaon ABŪ'L-FATH IŠHĀQ B. AL-SHUWAYKH, i.e., ISAAC B. ISRAEL, is in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī; in more detail, he also calls him "Fakhr al-dawla Abū'l-Fath Išhāq b. Abī'l-Ḥasan b. Abī'l-Barakāt b. al-Shuwaykh"; he describes him and notes that he was an upright man who behaved according to the precepts of the Torah; he was an expert in the knowledge of the stars and in the science of mathematics; and an expert in literature and grammar; he was over 80 when he died; the date of his death: 10 Ramaḍān 645, 8 January 1248; he was buried on the Mount of Olives. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī has a description of an incident that occurred between him and the *qāḍī* Muḥyī al-dīn Abū 'Abdallah Muḥammad b. Faḍlān, regarding the *jizya* (poll tax) payment. The *qāḍī* was strict about the *jizya* being paid only at the tax office—*dīwān al-jawālī*—where those who were waiting suffered while awaiting their turn. The head of the yeshiva went to the *qāḍī* at night to make the payment, to avoid the difficulties reporting at the *dīwān*, but the *qāḍī* refused to accept the payment, saying that he had to report to the *dīwān*. This took place in 627 (which began on 20 November 1229). Another Arabic writer, Ibn al-Šuqā'ī, related that "the head of the Jews' yeshiva", participated in the vizier's *majlis* (assembly), and was the only person there who could explain why it was actually desirable to attend the bathhouse on Wednesday—this day referring to the *ʿaṭārīd* (the planet Mercury), and the bathhouse is ascribed to it (i.e., the god Mercurius), and that it was desirable that the beginning of the walk to the bathhouse be when this planet was in conjunction with a luck bringing star. Ibn al-Šuqā'ī

does not mention the yeshiva head's name, but considering the time framework, it appears that he was Isaac Ibn Shuwaykh, as al-Fuwaṭī also notes his knowledge of the stars.

Al-Ḥarīzī, in *Tahkemonī*, mentions Isaac b. Israel Ibn Shuwaykh: "and the best of the poets (in Babylonia), is R. Isaac son of Israel head of the yeshiva. Some of his poems are powerful and good. Most of them may be considered as broken shards.... it would have been better had he remained silent, no worm would have affected him, nor would he have been corrupted". Eleazar b. Jacob was more favorable about him, he composed rhymes about his illness, which affected his legs, that God had sent him "thou shalt not rise up and do not honour the face of your people", and also wrote a dirge when he died, praising his intelligence and wisdom and noting his fame, "from the River Gozan" (Khurāsān) "and unto Nō" (Alexandria), "and those who heard his lesson wept"; "who will be called and stand in the breach"; he mentions members of his family: Eleazar, Joseph, Saadia. A poem in his honour was also written by a scribal copyist, by the name of Mordecai, who copied for him, in Sel. 1532, 1221, Abū'l-Barakāt Hibat Allah's commentary to Ecclesiastes (about him see below, sec. 269): "... for Isaac, head of the yeshiva of scholars *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* and grandson of kings" etc. There was an exchange of letters between this gaon and Abraham, Maimonides' son, who wrote to him: "the letter of Master Abraham, son of Master Moses (Maimonides) of blessed memory, to the gaon Isaac b. Shuwaykh, of blessed memory"; only the letter's preamble has been preserved, where it says, among other things: "happy is he who.... was made the head of seven heads" meaning: his appointment as head of the yeshiva; perhaps alluding to "seven shepherds", Micah 5:5. This apparently means the seven *alūfīm* of the yeshiva.

What derives from what we have said until now, is that we do not know when Isaac Ibn Shuwaykh became gaon; we have seen that he already held the post in 1229, and that he died in January 1248.

After Isaac Ibn Shuwaykh, DANIEL B. SAMUEL B. ABŪ'L-RAB^c became gaon. According to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, in the year of Isaac Ibn Shuwaykh's death, AH 645 (8 May 1247-25 April 1248), apparently in the early Spring of 1248, the authorities appointed "Daniel b. Shmū'īl b. Abī'l-Rabī^c" (apparently, the son of the brother of Hibat Allah, Nethanel b. Abī'l-Rabī^c as *ra's al-mathība* (head of the yeshiva). The vizier, Mu'ayyad al-dīn Muḥammad b. al-^cAlqamī (above, sec. 252) carried out the appointment—bringing him to the *qāḍī al-quḍāh* ^cAbd al-Rahmān b. al-Lamghānī, who sat him down in front of him and said: "I have appointed you the leader of the people of your faith and your religion, according to the formulae formulated in the Muslim law (*al-sharī'a al-muḥammadiyya*), so that you ensure that they act by the rules of their faith and you shall instruct them what their laws have taught them, and forbid them what their law forbids them, and judge them in their rivalries and their disputes as is obligated by their law". Afterwards, he arose and placed his headdress upon his head, in the *qāḍī's* corridor, then he proceeded to his house in a procession, with a public of Jews and a group of the people of the *dīwān*". The rabble whipped themselves up and threw stones at them, but the authorities put a stop to it, apprehending some of them, throwing them into jail and punishing them.

The gaon, Daniel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Abū'l-Rabi^c is mentioned by Eleazar b. Jacob. In one poem, he expresses bitterness over the injustice perpetrated by the gaon; against Eleazar implied in another poem is that the poet benefited from his generosity ("Daniel son of Aaron [i.e., the *kōhēn*] supplants our impoverishment with munificence... and you were kind in supporting us when our steps deviated"); the third poem is a dirge over his death, and implied is that Daniel was subjected to the slurs of his rivals ("and these spoke lies about him"); in that dirge he mentions no less than 16 of Daniel's family members and associates, including two by the name of Samuel; one is the "*nagid* of God's people.... sun of the kingdom" (Shams al-dawla?); he is "wise in the holy tongue and the language of the Arabs". The other is the "great grandson of the powerful of the yeshiva.... he will fill the place of the fathers". The others also receive the finest of praise and metaphors.

Daniel b. Samuel did not serve long in his post, he died in AH 648 (5 April 1250-25 March 1251); we have this information from Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, who states that in that year ʿALĪ B. ZAKHARIYĀ, a Jew from Irbil, asked to be appointed "head of the yeshiva of the Jews"; here, too, the vizier brought this ʿAlī b. Zechariah to the *qāḍī al-quḍāh*, who sat him down in front of him, conducted the ceremony as seen regarding Daniel b. Samuel, and recited the same formula; now, however, the Baghdad rabble did not throw stones at him. Eleazar b. Jacob mentions a gaon by the name of ʿAlī, undoubtedly the same ʿAlī b. Zechariah. One poem has blessings for the recovery of the gaon when ill, and two of his sons are mentioned ("two cherubs, of the cherished ones"). In a poem dedicated to the *siyāma*, apparently, the conclusion of a section of the studies of his son Šaḥī al-dawla Joshua, we learn that though ʿAlī was from Irbil, i.e., a provincial, he called him "child of the geonim", "great grandson of heads of yeshivot"; we may assume that he was a descendant of Zechariah b. Berakhel, and, on Zechariah b. Berakhel's wife's side, a great grandson of Samuel b. Eli. The third poem is a dirge over the death of one of ʿAlī's sons by the name of Zechariah, before ʿAlī was appointed gaon. There is also a poem where he blesses Zechariah son of the gaon upon his marriage to the daughter of Abū'l-Ṭayyib b. Faḍlān. The Ibn Faḍlān family, of which we hear over the course of a few generations, were kind of the Rothschilds of Baghdad. It appears that they made great charitable contributions at that time: "a flood of gifts"; "they graciously fed people and provided salvation for the poor". From the same source we learn that Zechariah b. ʿAlī carried the title of *seḡan ha-yeshivā*. In another poem the poet mourns the death of a woman, apparently the wife of a certain Samuel, and comforts the "heart of ʿAlī *ge'on ya'aqōv*"—it may have been on the death of his daughter.

It is reasonable to assume—though not with certainty—that it is ʿAlī b. Zechariah who was gaon when the Mongols conquered Baghdad, in 1258. From this point we have no further knowledge of the geonim of Baghdad, until we come across two letters written by "Samuel ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva b. Daniel ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva", and also: "Samuel ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva b. Daniel ha-Kohen head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora". The letters were from Tishri, Sel. 1600, October 1288, and written at the time of the great controversy over Maimonides fomented by Solomon Petit b. Samuel (above, sec. 260). One letter was sent to the

scholars of Acre and to David, Maimonides' grandson, while the address of the other letter has not been preserved. The first letter states, among other things, "we have already agreed with the scholars of Babylon that if they are not convinced to repent" etc.—relevant here is a ban issued against those who do not return the letters attacking the "Guide for the Perplexed". Samuel also adds greetings from "our two sons, Ḥananel and Aaron, the *kōhanīm*", and also from "the *talmidīm* and the members of the yeshiva". The other letter censures the critics of the "Guide for the Perplexed", "how they tattle about it, those fools". It appears that the opposition to Maimonides, especially to the "Guide for the Perplexed", struck deep roots among the people of Provence and other Jewish centers in Western Europe. Bar Hebraeus testifies that (in the second half of the thirteenth century) he met Jews (in Muslim countries) who called the book—so he writes—*al-dalāla* (the error) instead of *al-dalāla* (*Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn*, the original, Arabic name, of the book). Furthermore, in Antioch and Tripoli (in Syria) he met people from Christian countries (al-Firanj) who cursed Maimonides, saying he was a heretic.

Among the *dīwān* poems of Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian, a fragment of a poem has been preserved, which, according to the title, was written by the poet in honor of the marriage "of the head of the yeshiva, Samuel b. Daniel ha-Kohen b. Abū'l-Rabī^c, of blessed memory", when marrying the daughter of the head of the yeshiva, Isaac ha-Levi b. °Alī, of blessed memory. From here Mann assumed that he had located proof, that between °Alī b. Zechariah and Samuel b. Daniel, there was another gaon, by the name of Isaac ha-Levi b. °Alī. Yet this is greatly in doubt, since we have no other information about this Isaac ha-Levi b. °Alī. Since central yeshivot in Damascus, and the Maghrib as well, had already been established then, about whose leaders we have no information for the middle of the thirteenth century, it is possible that the head of one of these yeshivot had married the daughter of a Babylonian gaon.

This is the final information regarding the Babylonian geonim; thus the curtain falls (as far as our information is concerned) on a community and cultural continuum of a thousand years of hegemony of the Babylonian yeshivot over the Jewish diasporas.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁸ Isaac b. al-Awānī: al-Ḥarīzī, *Tahkemōnī*, 195; cf. Kaufmann, *ZfHB*, 2: 188, 1897. See Eleazar Ben Jacob, 17 (no. 18), 18 (no. 19), 136 (no. 317), and see *ibid.* in the Introduction, the editor's (Brody) comments on the period of this poet; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 45f., and his assumption that Isaac ha-Kohen might be identical with Isaac Gaon, called also Sar Shālōm, who was a preacher and toured the cities of Iraq, preaching there, and his sermons are preserved in Arabic in a manuscript, named *Maṭṭē 'ōz*, see Neubauer, *Cat.*, 1001, and also in the Addenda to the *Catalogue*; cf. Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 228 (no. 168). See also: Mann, *Texts*, I, 225f.; Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 3(1931/2), 342f.; Isaac b. Shuwaykh, see Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīs*, III, 112f.; *idem*, *Ḥawādith*, 13, and see the editor's note in Ibn al-Sā'ī, 266. See Ibn al-Ṣuqā'ī, 173f.; the editor read there: برأس منينة اليهود; cf. Vajda, *Arabica*, 23(1926), 83. See al-Ḥarīzī, *Tahkemōnī*, 195; Eleazar Ben Jacob, 37 (no. 104), 96f. (no. 215); cf. Fischel, *Jews*, 129f.; see Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 44f.; Isaac 'the mighty' head of the yeshiva *ge'ōn ya'aqōv* is mentioned also in poem no. 4 of Eleazar Ben Jacob (p. 6); in no. 5 (pp. 6f.), the poet thanks Ibn Shuwaykh for having drawn his attention to a number of errors in his previous poems. The poem of the copyist Mordecai: Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam Yesh.* (reprint), 158; Abraham Maimuni's letter: A.B.Y.N. (= Neubauer), *ha-Maggid*, 16 (1871/2), 151, from an Oxford manuscript, see Neubauer, *Cat.*, no. 1315 (col. 463); he also edited the fragment,

The Later Babylonian Geonim

Isaac b. Moses b. Sukkarī—about 1070?

Eli—until about 1130

Solomon—from about 1130 to about 1160

Samuel b. Eli—from about 1160 to about 1198

Zechariah b. Berakhel—in 1198

Eleazar b. Hillel b. Fahd—from about 1198 to about 1201

Daniel b. Eleazar b. Hibat Allah—from about 1201 to 1209

Hibat Allah b. Abī'l Rabī^c—in 1209

Isaac ha-Kohen b. al-Awānī—about 1212-1220

Isaac b. Israel Ibn al-Shuwaykh—about 1220 to 8 January 1248

Daniel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Abī'l-Rabī^c—1248-1251

^cAlī b. Zechariah—from 1251

Samuel ha-Kohen b. Daniel—in 1288

22. Jewish figures in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries

(269) After having surveyed the available information about the leaders of Babylonian Jewry—the exilarchs, *nesī'im*, heads of yeshivot—I will now deal with a number of other Jewish figures, regarding whom information in Jewish and Arabic sources has been preserved, and which is at our disposal. There are humanists, some of whom changed their religion; prominent financiers; and also some other figures who had belonged to the world of the Babylonian yeshivot. I will begin with three figures, among the prominent humanists of the twelfth century, who abandoned the religion of their fathers and converted to Islam. To understand the general background of persecutions and restrictions imposed upon the Jews, and information

in *Isr. letter b.*, 31 (1877/8), 51; among the sublime figures of style, Abraham Maimuni mentions there a letter sent to him by the Babylonian gaon; see a list of his poems: Davidson, *Ōṣar*, IV, 419 (in the Index). Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 43f., has a detailed list of six of his poems; see on Isaac b. Shuwaykh also: Fischel, *MGWJ*, 79 (1935), 308ff.; *idem.*, *Jews*, 131; Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē bāvel*, 31ff.; Daniel b. Samuel's appointment: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 218; see Eleazar Ben Jacob, *ibid.*, 41 (no. 118), 58f. (no. 170); 88-90 (no. 206); cf. Fischel, *MGWJ*, *ibid.*, 310-315; Finkel, *JQR*, NS 26 (1935/6), 238; Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 46-49, only knew what is said of him in Eleazar Ben Jacob's book. See Ben Jacob, *Zion*, 15 (1950), 68f., who cites a funerary inscription, of Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Abī'l-Rabī^c, who died in Sel. 1508 (1199) and is almost certain that he was the brother of Daniel Gaon; one should notice the great difference between the years in which each of the two died, about 50 years, and this should mean that Aaron was born many years before David, and died while still relatively young. ^cAlī b. Zechariah: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 248; cf. Fischel, *MGWJ*, *ibid.*, 315-317; Ibn al-'Ibrī (Bar Hebraeus) on Maimonides: *Duwal*, 417f. See Eleazar Ben Jacob, 27 (no. 55); 68f. (no. 182); 103f. (no. 221); 67 (no. 181); 64f. (no. 179); cf. Poznanski, *ibid.*, 49-52; see *ibid.*, 78, a *'aqēda*, a *piyyūt* on the offering up of Isaac, with the acrostic *'Alī gā'ōn*, about which Poznanski plausibly assumed that *'Alī* b. Zechariah is intended, see *ibid.*, 30 n. 3. A Babylonian *'aqēda* is a rarity; cf. Fleischer, *Shirat ha-g.*, 470. Samuel ha-Kohen b. Daniel, see Halberstam, *Jeschurun* (Kobak), 7 (1870/1), 76ff.; Steinschneider, *Geschichtslit.* 55; cf. Poznanski, *ibid.*, 52f. Samuel b. Daniel's marriage: Eleazar Ben Jacob, 128 (no. 301); see Mann, *Texts*, I, 226.

about the messianic movement soon to be discussed, I refer the reader to sections 244-248, above.

Some Arabic sources tell us of ABŪ'L-BARAKĀT HIBAT ALLAH B. ʿALĪ B. MALKĀ. He was a native of Balad, near Mosul; a renowned physician at the time of Caliph al-Mustanjid (March 1160-December 1170), who served as a court physician. According to one of the versions, Abū'l-Barakāt was the physician of Sayf al-dīn Ghāzī b. Zanjī, ruler of Mosul, in AH 544, AD 1149/50. According to another version, he was the physician of Sultan Maḥmūd in the area of Jibāl (Media). Maḥmūd's wife was the cousin of Maḥmūd, daughter of Sanjār, and Maḥmūd was deeply in love with her. She died after contracting an illness, and, fearing that the sultan might order his execution, Abū'l-Barakāt converted to Islam. Yet another version tells that his conversion was caused by satanic verses composed against him because he was a Jew. Another version: he converted to Islam because the *qāḍī al-quḍāh* did not rise to greet him when he entered the sultan's chamber, even though all the others present did do so; this event occurred towards the end of his life. Fantastic stories circulated about his healing prowess. He healed an emotionally ill person who claimed that he always had a pitcher on his head, by instructing, as it were, his servants to knock a pitcher down, and immediately show the patient broken sherds. In a case of the *dāḥis*—paronychia—a fingernail infection, he would amputate the phalange, otherwise, the infection might spread and endanger the patient's life. He cured a Baghdadi's cough by prescribing that he eat *nāranj* (a kind of a bitter citrus fruit), which exacerbated the cough, a method which caused some wonderment, especially since the cough remedies he prescribed were based on the nature of the phlegm. He died about AH 560, AD 1165, at the age of 80 (some say: 90). Before his death, he obtained a guarantee from the caliph that his property would be passed to his daughters, even though they had not converted to Islam.

Abū'l-Barakāt was considered the leading philosopher in Iraq, estimated to have achieved the level of Aristotle. Therefore, his contemporaries referred to him as: *Awḥad al-zamān*, singular in his generation; he did not deny it, and asked that the term be inscribed on his headstone: "this is the grave of *Awḥad al-zamān*, *Abū'l Barakāt*, man of the lessons, author of (*kitāb*) *al-mu'tabir* (book of lessons)", because he thought very highly of this book. Aside from this book, he wrote a number of treatises (*maqālāt*) for the sultan Ghayyāth al-dīn Abū Shujāʿ Muḥammad b. Malikshāh, including a treatise on why the stars shine at night and disappear in the day. He also wrote a book on medicines, especially on poison antidotes, *Ṣifat barsha'thā*, a description of the antidotes; and another book on medicines: *Kitāb al-aqrābādīn*, "book of antidotes"; he also wrote an epistle on reason and its essence; he wrote a synopsis of Galenus; and more. As to his medical studies, it was said that, as a youth, he sought to be the student of the most famous physician of the time, Abū'l-Ḥasan Sa'īd b. Hibat Allah b. al-Ḥusayn who did not accept him, because Abū'l-Barakāt was a Jew; consequently Abū'l-Barakāt bribed the door keepers who let him sit in the corridor and listen to the lessons; when a problem arose for which no one knew the solution, after asking permission, he entered and brought Galenus' teaching, even citing the exact date it had been studied there; thereafter Abū'l-Ḥasan accepted him into the close circle of students.

It was said that after his conversion to Islam, Abū'l-Barakāt sought to prove that his conversion had indeed been genuine, and in the presence of Amīn al-dawla b. al-Tilmīdh declared that he was asking for God's curse on the Jews and the sons of the Jews (i.e., on himself, as well). Also mentioned is his student, Muhaddhab, an important physician. "He was a student of Abū'l-Barakāt, a Jewish physician, in Baghdad". Towards the end of his life, Abū'l-Barakāt contracted leprosy, sought to cure himself, but became blind and died from the disease.

There is also information about the Jewish side in the life and activities of Abū'l-Barakāt. Firstly, we must pay attention to the fact that the person known as Abū'l-Barakāt Hibat Allah ibn Malkā is none other than Baruch b. Melekh, known for the surviving remnants of his Talmud commentaries. In the Geniza writings, there are citations from Talmud commentaries, and as Abramson has shown in one of his articles, it may be concluded that he wrote a commentary to the tractate *Sōḥā*. In that article, Abramson also published a poem written by Baruch b. Melekh (i.e., Abū'l-Barakāt). This poem will yet be mentioned below. Modern scholars who studied Abū'l-Barakāt did not observe his identity with Baruch b. Melekh. Indeed, as I will show below, Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra, in a poem dedicated to him, calls him Nethanel, an accepted Hebrew translation of the Arabic name, Hibat Allah (gift of God), but nowhere else—as far as we know—is he called Nethanel, while his *kunya*, Abū'l-Barakāt, undoubtedly suits a man by the name of Baruch. The Aramaic name Malkā is Melekh (king) in Hebrew. Abū'l-Barakāt also wrote a commentary to Ecclesiastes, written (actually, completed, or the copy was completed) in Sel. 1454, in the month of Siwan, according to the aforementioned poem of Isaac Ibn Ezra. Siwan, in that year, began on 16 May 1143.

Three generations after his death, the people of Mosul still knew where the *bayt al-awḥad*, i.e., Abū'l-Barakāt's house was; a member of the exilarchic dynasty, Jalāl al-dawla, noted in a letter of 28 April 1237, that the roof of the house of *bayt al-awḥad* had collapsed.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁹ A conspectus of the biographical details regarding the three personages, based on some of the sources cited by me, can be found in the article Abū'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (by S. Pines), in *IEJ*²; in the editor's (M. Schmelzer) introduction to the *diwān* of Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra; in the editor's (M. Perlmann) introduction to Samawāl Ibn 'Abbās' *Iḥām al-yahūd*; and in the article about these three: S. Stroumsa, in *Pe'amim*, 42 (1990), 66ff. See on Abū'l-Barakāt: Ibn al-Qifṭī, 343ff.; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, 374ff.; Balad: see Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 225; physician of Sayf al-dīn: Ghunayma, 129. Šafādī, *Nakt*, 304. Šafādī included him in this book, containing biographies of blind personages, since Abū'l-Barakāt lost his sight at the end of his life. The inheritance of Abū'l-Barakāt's daughters: Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, 376; Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Duwal*, 364; Bayhaqī, 150ff., adds that Abū'l-Barakāt was imprisoned by the sultan Muḥammad Ibn Malikshāh, since Abū'l-Barakāt was afraid of treating the sultan's son, Mas'ūd, when he fell ill of colic (*qūlanj*), and died from this illness. The sultan himself also died, after a short time. This happened in ca. 547, AD 1152/3. Bayhaqī praises Abū'l-Barakāt as a philosopher, and notes that he lived 90 'solar' years. Amīn al-dawla: Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *ibid.*, see there also 349-355: Amīn al-dawla was a Christian physician. See Fiey, *Chrétiens*, 231: Amīn al-dawla Hibat Allah b. al-Tilmīdh was a Christian, he competed with Abū'l-Barakāt Ibn Malkā, and brought about his dismissal, since Abū'l-Barakāt slandered him. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a cites Sa'd al-dīn Abū Sa'd b. Abī'l-Sahl al-Baghdādī al-ʿAwwād, who was also a Jew who converted to Islam, and lived in the Jewish quarter (probably in Mosul) close to Abū'l-Barakāt's house, and most of the information about Abū'l-Barakāt was supplied by him. In one of his works, Suhrawardī mentioned in *al-Talwīḥāt* ('the annotations'; in a Vienna MS.), a Jewish philosopher,

(270) We must also deal with ISAAC B. ABRAHAM IBN EZRA and his stay in Baghdad. This is what we know about the beginning of his Babylonian journey: after accompanying the poet Judah ha-Levi to Egypt, Isaac left Egypt, in Av, which is August, 1141. On 12 Marheshwan, Sel. 1454, 2 November 1142, he was in the city of Jazīrat Ibn ʿUmar (more on this later), and in Siwan, Sel. 1454, beginning that year on 16 May 1143, he wrote his poem in honor of Abū'l-Barakāt, as stated above, after having copied the latter's Ecclesiastes commentary for him, in Baghdad ("the city of Babylon"). It may be that Isaac's father, Abraham Ibn Ezra, also visited Babylonia; this, is however, not certain.

Isaac wrote in wonderment about Abū'l-Barakāt: "God made you singular in your generation (*awḥad al-zamān!*) Nethanel (Nethanel, as stated above, is kind of a translation of Hibat Allah) as a sign for the nations, *nagid* of His people and its princes, with your wisdom you enlighten its elders, and with your words you train its youth.... our Rock (i.e., God) has prepared you as second to the Ecclesiastes.... and with your commentaries you loosened his knots.... now the Ecclesiastes is named after you", etc. He then says: "I, Isaac son of Abraham, wrote it". From a colophon at the head of his *dīwān*, and from another colophon, preserved in the Silvera manuscript, we learn that Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra wrote the poems in *al-jazīra al-ʿumariyya*, and that he presented them to Abū Ṭāhir Abraham head of the yeshiva (the Damascus yeshiva) in Marheshwan, Sel. 1454, November 1142. According to Benjamin of Tudela, ʿUmariyya was the base of the person referred to in his essay as David al-Rōʾī, as stated above (sec. 248).

Al-Ḥarīzī says about Isaac b. Abraham: "...and on the poems of the son from the luster of the father. Yet upon arriving in the lands of the East, the

meaning Abū'l-Barakāt, see it in Schreiner, *ZDMG*, 42 (1888), 640. Muhaddhab: Bar-Hebraeus, *Chronicle* (Budge), 367; Muhaddhab bequeathed his house for establishing a medical school, which was indeed established, in 1232, on the condition that neither Jews nor Christians would be accepted as students. See *ibid.*, 466 (Bedjan), 399 (Budge). Abū'l-Barakāt's books: see Dietrich, *Medic. Arab.*, 228ff., about his book *Ṣifāt barshā'thā*; on his works on medical science see: Wüstenfeld, *Gesch. d. ar. Ärzte*, 98f.; on all his works: Brockelmann, *GAL*, GI, 460; SI, 831. His *kitāb al-mu'tabir* was published by Zayn al-ʿAbidin al-Mūsawī, Haydarabad, 1938; in vol. III, 234, it has a compendium on Abū'l-Barakāt's biography, written by Sulaymān al-Nadwī. See Abramson's article on Baruch b. Melekh: *Tarbīz*, 19 (1948), 42ff. The poem which he publishes there is from MS Mosseri V.6, see the Catalogue of the Mosseri Collection (1990), 121. The commentary on Ecclesiastes: Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam Yesh.* (reprint), 47; a manuscript of it is kept in Petersburg, which is a copy prepared in 1532 Sel., 1221; another manuscript is in Oxford, see Cat. Uri., I, 14 (Add.), 560 = MS Poc. 274. Abū'l-Barakāt is mentioned in Zakuto's *Yūḥasīn*, 149a, the details having been taken, apparently, from an Arabic source; see also *Divrē ha-yāmīm le-malkhē ha-ishmeʿēlīm*, MS Sassoon no. 578, p. 371. Jalāl al-dawla's letter: 95. See on Abū'l-Barakāt also: Grätz, *Gesch.*, VI, 258f., Steinschneider, *ZDMG*, 56 (1902), 79; *idem*, *Ar. Lit.*, 812ff. (no. 148). Bausani, in *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 289, notes that Abū'l-Barakāt was a keen opponent of Ibn Sīnā, and earned a disparaging remark by ʿUmar Khayyām: "Abū'l-Barakāt does not even understand the meaning of what Ibn Sīnā wrote, so how could he oppose something which he does not know?" See also the collected articles on Abū'l-Barakāt by S. Pines, *Studies in Abū'l-Barakāt*, and also his article on the commentary on Ecclesiastes: *Tarbīz*, 33 (1963/4), 198ff.; see also Levy, *Baghdad Chron.*, 231. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 303, remarks that people of that generation apparently did not attach much significance to his conversion, which is proven by the fact that Samuel b. Eli, the Baghdadi gaon, makes use of his book; see on this matter: S. Stroumsa, in *Blau Jub. Vol.*, 415ff.

honor of God did not shine upon him. He divested himself of the cherished cloaks of the religion, stripped off his clothing and donned other attire". Meaning: he changed his religion and converted to Islam. Ascribed to Isaac is the poem beginning: "They challenge me because of leaving the covenant of God, my departure from the righteous covenant to misdeed"; then biblical figures who had sinned, but were subsequently forgiven: Moses, Judah, Amnon, David, Samson are mentioned, and the writer adds: "I have not ever eaten unclean food, as I considered it to be denatured carcass meat; and if *meshūgā'* (the insane) said he is the prophet of God (insane—an accepted nickname for the Prophet of Islam in those generations) and I thank him at the beginning of each prayer, with my mouth I speak and my heart says: you lie and your testimony is false. I have already returned to the shade of the wings of the Holy Presence, I ask from thee, God, forgiveness". Yet there is no certainty that Isaac b. Ezra is the writer of this poem, and there is a version of it in the Geniza, entitled: "so said Baruch b. Melekh", i.e., Abū'l-Barakāt. Indeed, according to the Schocken Manuscript 37, that poem is ascribed to Isaac Ibn Ezra, and there are other assumptions and data that ascribe this poem to others; one may claim that if—as in one of the assumptions that I explain below—the conversion stemmed from despair—it is unreasonable that he would recant. But there are no biographical data on Abū'l-Barakāt and his character to negate this possibility, that he returned to Judaism and its precepts, secretly, of course.²⁷⁰

(271) I am now arriving at the third figure among the triad of converts, SAMAWĀL (SAMUEL) B. YAḤYĀ (JUDAH) IBN ʿABBĀS (ĀVŌN) AL-MAGHRIBĪ. As he himself wrote in his book, "Silencing the Jews", his

²⁷⁰ See on Abraham Ibn Ezra's visit to Babylonia: J.L. Fleischer, *Kiryat sefer*, (1925/27), 167, where he refers to the opinion that he stayed in Babylonia, basing this on the poems of his son, Isaac, who after mentioning his (noble) extraction—son of Abraham Ibn Meir Ibn Ezra, all of them Spaniards, he writes: "who was measuring his steps on (the earth of) Babylonia"; Fleischer rightly pointed out that it is Isaac who strolled around in Babylonia, and was referring to himself, not to his father; see the poem in Isaac Ibn Ezra's *Shīrīm*, Schmelzer, 45, lines 38ff. And see the whole poem no. 36, *ibid.*; see Ben Menahem, *Tarbiz*, 25 (1955/6), 93. See al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemōnī*, 45 (part 3). *Yerivūnī*, see the *Shīrīm* of Isaac Ibn Ezra, 147. The sayings of Baruch b. Melekh: see TS AS 111.1. See Abraham Ibn Ezra's poem, in Isaac Ibn Ezra's *Shīrīm* (ed. Ben-Menahem), 36f.; see the Schmelzer edition, in the Introduction, 16. See Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 390f. In his commentary to Ex. 29:19, Abraham Ibn Ezra mentions the customs of eating a kid "in Spain and Africa and Palestine and Persia and Babylonia"; also in his commentary to Ex. 28:36, explaining *šṭr*: in Arabic it is *ʿiṣāba*, which one uses to wear "in the land of Ishmael, and Spain, and Africa and Egypt and Babylonia and Baghdad", but only men and the most grand among them wear it. Obviously, this is not proof that he himself was in Persia or in Babylonia. See also Geiger, *ZDMG*, 13 (1859), 711f.; Harkavy, *Ḥad. gam. Yesh.* (reprint), 155; Ben-Menahem, *Sinai*, 6 (1992/3), 444 doubted the conversion of Isaac b. Abraham, claiming that it might have been a rumor, caused by the close relationship between Isaac and Abū'l-Barakāt, that he converted; but there is no reason to doubt the evidence of the *Taḥkemōnī*'s author. See also: Mirsky, *Kiryat sefer*, 27 (1951), 301; Schirmann, *Ha-shīrā*, 624ff.; Ben Jacob, *Yehūdē bavel*, 35; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 302f.; see Fleischer, *I. Lewin Jub. Vol.*, 264ff.: a discussion on the question of whether Isaac was the son-in-law of Judah ha-Levi, where he argues that he was indeed. See also: S. Katz, in *Y. Ratzaby Jub. Vol.*, with views that are different from those expressed here. And see now in Gil-Fleischer, *Yehūdā ha-lēvī*, the discussion by Fleischer, wishing to prove that Isaac was indeed the son-in-law of Judah ha-Levi, on pp. 157-160; and the objections of Gil, on pp. 250f.

father was R. Judah b. Āvōn from the city of Fās, in the far Maghrib, whose nickname was Abū'l-Baqā'.

The father was a Fās resident, while Āvōn, the grandfather, came from "the city of Malaqa...." in Spain (today's Malaga). In the acrostics of his poems, he calls himself, "Judah of Fās son of Āvōn of the city of Malaqa". Judah lived in Baghdad, and died in 1164 or 1167. Samawāl's mother was a Baṣrian, one of the three daughters of Isaac b. Abraham ha-Levi al-Baṣrī; his maternal grandmother was Nafīsa daughter of Abū Naṣr al-Da'ūdī, i.e., of the exilarchic dynasty, and he adds: Abū Naṣr's descendants reside in Fustat to this day. According to Arabic sources, Samawāl lived for a while in Baghdad, then moved to Persia; he was a Jew and converted to Islam; excelled in mathematical sciences; then stayed in Adharbayjān, and died at a young age in Marāgha, (the main city in that country), near AH 570, i.e., AD 1174. According to Bar Hebraeus, he was also a renowned physician. He was in the service of the rulers from the Pahlawān dynasty. He wrote, according to Safadī, 85 treatises in the fields of mathematics and geometry, algebra, surveying, astronomy, medicine, literature, etc. On 9 Dhū'l-ḥijja 558, 8 November 1163, he saw the Prophet Muḥammad in a dream, and when he woke up immediately converted to Islam.

Al-Ḥarīzī writes about the father, Judah, and about the son, i.e., Samuel-Samawāl: "R. Judah b. ʿAbbās was also from the countries of the West and the East and traveled the route of poetry. He wrote lovely and pleasing poems, some are worthless, neither pleasing or good; he sired a noble son, who aroused and incited many obscenities".

Samuel's book, "Silencing the Jews", is a polemical work against the Jews' religion and sacred books; a scholarly edition was published by M. Perlmann. The book also contains a kind of autobiography of his, where among other things, he notes that he studied medicine with the philosopher Abū'l-Barakāt Hibat Allah b. ʿAlī.

These, therefore, are three figures, clearly among the most important Jewish humanists of the mid-twelfth century: the eldest of them, Baruch (i.e., Abū'l-Barakāt, i.e., Hibat Allah) b. Melekh (Ibn Malkā), the Bible and Talmud commentator, poet, broadly learned, physician, philosopher; the second was a fine poet, Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra, of important lineage—son of Abraham Ibn Ezra—a sensitive, talented, and very articulate poet; the third was a physician, mathematician, prolific writer, with family connections to the exilarchic dynasty, Samuel b. Judah b. Āvōn (ʿAbbās). There was, beyond doubt, a connection among the three, and the outstanding of them was Abū'l-Barakāt. We have seen that Isaac composed a poem in his honor, in the summer of 1143, and copied his Ecclesiastes commentary; Samuel, i.e., Samawāl, was Abū'l-Barakāt's student; the three of them converted, it is reasonable to assume, at the same time.

The first question that comes to mind, is, of course, why did the three figures convert? It may be assumed that the driving force was the dominant figure in the group, Abū'l-Barakāt. The conversion may be explained in three ways.

The first possible explanation is that the three of them believed in the superiority of the Muslim religion and the Prophet Muḥammad. Abū'l-Barakāt's great book, written along the lines of the Islamic tradition, is

apparent testimony of such; and, of course, also Samawāl's sharp polemical tract against the Jewish religion.

A second possibility is that Abū'l-Barakāt was, from the outset, a cynic and kind of nihilist, and his status in the social elite to which he belonged drove him into full integration in Muslim society in order to gain more prestige; or was it that he sought to escape the ruler's wrath, as noted in one of the reasons that I cited above. If so, the pursuit of honor and material advantages determined his move, and the two associates followed him, one after the other.

A third possibility, one requiring more of a comprehensive explanation, is that the act was tied to the collapse of the messianic movement that I have described above (secs. 244-248)—a movement centered about the Rūgī family, of whom we know of Solomon b. Rūgī, and his son, Menaḥem. It should be noted, that implied in the sources, beginning with the story of Obadiah the Proselyte and until the books of Samawāl and of Benjamin of Tudela, is that this was no short-lived movement, nor a sudden awakening, but it lasted from the 1090s, until the 1160s, that is, about 70 years, as a kind of rooted pietistic party with many believers. Abū'l-Barakāt spread about, as we have seen, different versions of the reasons for the conversion; there is no reason to think that the tellers, themselves, fabricated them, rather that it was Abū'l-Barakāt who wanted to hide the real reason, ergo, the shock caused by the collapse of the 'messiah' and his movement. This collapse is what generated a low self-image and self-hatred, which may explain the abandonment of the religion and the wish to draw God's curse, not only onto the Jews, but also onto the sons of the Jews and on himself, on Baruch Abū'l-Barakāt. In a poem he wrote that has been preserved in the Geniza and dedicated to someone called "the prince Isaac", and whose sign in the acrostic is *bārūkh ḥazaq* (be strong Bārūkh), there are some messianic hints, as has already been explained by Abramson. "Pleasant as the messiah" (line 5); "I shall rise up to the great mountain fortress" (line 19)—as in Zechariah 4:7 ("Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel") that the *midrāsh* explains as: "this great mountain is the king messiah". And in his request of God: "send the reddish one" (line 25), this is the red-haired one, David, the messiah. And the end: "I hereby send the prince Yinōn the messiah" (according to Psalms 72:17, interpreted by R. Yannai in the Babylonian Talmud *Sanhedrin* 98b: that the messiah's name is Yinōn). It appears that "the prince Isaac", is none other than Isaac Ibn Ezra.

We have seen Isaac Ibn Ezra in Jazīrat al-ʿUmariyya, which is ʿUmariyya in Benjamin of Tudela, the base of the messiah, i.e., Menaḥem b. Rūgī, called in Benjamin's text, David al-Rō'ī. (Actually, in Samawāl's version Menaḥem was active in ʿUmadiyya, but it appears to be a scribal correction, because the Arabic sources do not mention the name ʿUmariyya, or al-Jazīra al-ʿUmariyya, but Jazīrat ibn ʿUmar.) Apparently, according to the dates that I mentioned above, Isaac could have stayed in the city of the 'messiah', ʿUmariyya, from the end of the summer of 1141 until some months before the summer of 1143, i.e., about a year-and-a-half.

Also to be noted are the far-reaching metaphors Isaac Ibn Ezra dedicates in some of his poems to a man by the name of Solomon: "for is not the prince Solomon among the prophets, learn from his actions, which give

him praise"; "the greatest is the wisdom of Solomon, that was hidden from the people of Sheba" (the people of Sheba in the Queen of Sheba's entourage, I Kings chapter 6); "happy and sad are they, for they trust in you and hold you in awe"; "friend of the Highest, chosen of God who desired him"; "God granted him grace and generosity in the eyes of all"; "in the day the oppressed will stand trial, in truth he will remove the destitute from his poverty"; "for him all the position holders are slaves"; "God set him over his nation, a righteous leader and regent of his people and made his rank superior than Arcturus in heaven; and on earth, His footstool, he made Shabbetai to erect his tents"; "it seems that his cheek was created in His image, in his face there is the light of truth and brilliance"; "and for those who love him he is called Solomon who has revealed the secrets of the Mishnā and Talmud"; "and he sat in the yeshiva company as a king sits among grasshoppers"; "compared to him all wise men are grasshoppers". It may be that Isaac meant Solomon b. Rūgī, in these poems; there is indeed another possibility, that he meant Solomon Gaon, the head of the Baghdad yeshiva, whose estimated time is about 1130-1160 (see the expressions, "secrets of the Mishnā and Talmud", "yeshiva company"; we have hardly any information about Solomon Gaon, except for his name).

Samawāl, who abandoned the religion of his ancestors, included the feats of Menaḥem b. Solomon in his book against the Jews, for he had close knowledge of the messianic movement and, virtually certain, was among its adherents at the time of Solomon and Menaḥem, though he hid this fact in his "Silencing the Jews", a book meant mainly to curry favor with Muslims. Truth was not his main pursuit, and just as he fabricated the story of 'the flight', he hid and brushed off his connection with the messiah.

The collapse of that messianic arousal, was, as we have seen, shortly after 1160. Then, on 8 November 1163, Samawāl saw the Prophet of Islam in a dream, and rushed into to Islam; at about that time, Abū'l-Barakāt and Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra changed their religion. Quickening the end times, the great delusion, the abandonment of the religion—all of them, as is known, are regular stages and components of similar events at other times and places. The conversion of the three of them was an act of individuals. The masses of Jews who adhered to this messianic movement did not, apparently, emulate the move of the three. Since divine qualities were ascribed to the false messiah, his followers did not believe that he had died; in the words of Samawāl: the people continued to believe in Menaḥem b. Solomon b. Rūgī, even after he was killed.

Above, I have presented three possible suppositions regarding the conversion to Islam of the three figures; we do not have enough sources on which to base a decision about which of them is correct. Perhaps, in time, other sources will be uncovered or identified, to facilitate clearer conclusions.²⁷¹

²⁷¹ See on Samawāl: Munk, *Notice sur Joseph ben lehoua*, 7; see Ibn al-Qifṭī, 209; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, II, 30f.; Ibn al-Ṭibrī, *Duwal*, 377, who mentions that he wrote a book on medicine. On the house of Pahlawān see Bosworth, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 168ff.; see details on books written by him (also in mathematics) in the editor's—Perlmann's—introduction to Samawāl's *Iṣḥām*, 16, and see *ibid.*, in the Arabic part, 95f., the details on his family. See also Ṣafādī, *Wafayāt*, XV, 453f.; according to him he died in about 576, i.e. 1180. See al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemōnī*, 45 (third chapter). See also Sambarī, 146-149, who has an

(272) BENJAMIN B. JONAH OF TUDELA authored one of the most important sources of information about the countries of the Near East in the twelfth century, and, of course, primarily, he has the most important information about the Jews in the Islamic countries, some of which we have seen above. Benjamin, a native of Tudela, in northern Spain, left on a long journey which may have begun somewhere in the late 1150s, and lasted until 1173, when he returned to Spain. One of the problems which have preoccupied students, is when he stayed in Babylonia. It has already been proven that he was in Rome in 1166. Regarding his sojourn in Babylonia, the data is as follows: (1) "15 years before today" (another version: "18 years") the *kufr al-turk* arrived "to the land of Persia with a great army and seized the city of Rayy and smote it with the sword" etc. i.e., he mentions the conquest of Rayy from Sanjār b. Malikshāh. (2) "and 10 years ago there a man rose, by the name of David al-Rō'ī of the city of 'Umariyya" etc. We have seen (above, sec. 248) that the rebellion of David al-Rō'ī, i.e., Menaḥem b. Rūgī, against the rulers could have taken place between 1160 and 1167; we would not be straying far from the truth by assuming that Benjamin meant the high point of the rebellion—about 1164, i.e., the middle of the above period; then we would have to conclude that those ten years Benjamin was writing about are ten years before he related his travels, after his return to Spain in 1173. Because of the view that Sayf al-dīn should be read instead of Zayn al-dīn, that I have noted above, it was believed that the above rebellion affair took place between 1149 and 1155, thus it was proposed that the time of Benjamin's stay in Babylonia "ten

impossible date for his 'revelation': AH 575, AM 4957; basing on the *hijra* year it was 1180, while on the AM: 1197, both of which are erroneous; he says that his father's name was 'Azariah, and see *ibid.* the editor's notes. The scholarly edition is in vol. 32 (1964), of the *PAAJR*, and is based on MS Paris 1456 (which I checked), copied—as said therein—from an autograph of Samawāl, in AH 735; i.e. 1334/5; see the editor's comments *ibid.*, 16f.; see also Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 186ff.; Kauffmann, *REJ*, 10 (1885), 251, discusses the argument of Samawāl, that the Torah "of Ezra", the accepted one, is not identical with the authentic one (as according to the Qur'ān, the Jews falsified the Torah); and he finds a contemporary of Samawāl's, Abraham Ibn Da'ūd, in his *ha-Emūnā ha-rāmā*, arguing with those who believe in such an opinion, who say: "as they arrived in Babylonia, a man rose among them, called Ezra, who still remembered some of the Torah, and forgot some of it, and put into its verses things that had never been there before, if only they were fitting his own understanding, on which he built that Torah". From this Kauffmann deduced that Samawāl's conversion occurred earlier than 1163, as Abraham Ibn Da'ūd was able to know of that argumentation of Samawāl, and write against it; however, the argument that Ezra falsified the Torah was far from being an innovation of Samawāl, so that sort of argument is not relevant for the date of his conversion. See fol. 80a of *ha-Emūnā ha-rāmā* of Abraham Ibn Da'ūd in the edition of Samuelson and Weiss, 316; and the Weil edition, 79; see Samawāl, *Iḥḥām*, 50f. See also Schreiner, *MGWJ*, 42 (1898), 123ff.; his note on p. 125, that *al-Da'ūdī* does not mean "a person from the exilarchic family" is wrong; Grätz, *Gesch.*, IV 321; see on Judah b. Ḍvōn, Samuel's father: Bernstein, *Hertz Jub. Vol.*, 15ff.; *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 15 (1943/4), 98; *Sinai*, 10 (1945/6), 215; Schirmann, *Yedi'ot*, 6 (1945/6), 297ff.; Schirmann edited there a number of *piyyūṭim* of his; Scheiber, *Tarbiz*, 23 (1951/2), 127, edited another *piyyūṭ*, from the Adler Collection. See more on Samawāl: Fischel, *PAAJR*, 22 (1953), 3; Kraemer, *IOS*, 12 (1992), 63f. See Isaac Ibn Ezra's poem in honor of Abū'l-Barakāt; his poems 44f. (Schmelzer edition), and the poem of Baruch b. Melekh (who is Abū'l-Barakāt), in Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 19 (1947/8), 42ff.; "the great mountain": *Tanḥūmā*, ch. xx, no. 135ff. (the Buber edition, 139). See the poems in honor of Solomon in Isaac Ibn Ezra, *Shīrīm*, (Schmelzer edition), no. 6, lines 12, 17-19; no. 30, lines 8, 13, 24, 42; no. 32 lines 10, 18-20, 27-28; no. 40 line 12. On 'Umariyya-Imādiyya, see the sources I cited above, note 248.

years ago", was between 1159 and 1165, which is impossible; we cannot, with this data, surmise when he stayed in Babylonia. As to the *kufr al-turk*: it is the region of the Sir Darya that one was to call *dār al-kufr* in the twelfth century. The fall of Sanjār was caused by the Ghuzz, the pagan Turkish tribes, the Huns, an event that was part of the protracted war between Sanjār b. Malikshāh and the ruler of Khawārizm, in whose service the Ghuzz were first active. Sanjār suffered his first great downfall in Muḥarram 536, August 1141; the second one, when he was captured by the Ghuzz—in 538, i.e., 1153/4; this was certainly the debacle of which Benjamin was told; and if his stay in Babylonia was longer than one year, in all events, it was around 1168.²⁷²

(273) Among the important personages in Baghdad mentioned at the beginning of the thirteenth century, is the al-Barqūlī family, of Wāsiṭ. Three letters written by the Baghdad gaon, Daniel b. Eleazar, have been preserved, one to SAMUEL B. MEVORAKH AL-BARQŪLĪ, of I Adar, Sel. 1516, January-February 1205, and the other to ABŪ MANŠŪR MEVORAKH (as it should be read) B. SAMUEL AL-BARQŪLĪ "prince of the community and trustee of the kingdom", of Tishri, Sel. 1519, September-October 1207, which I have already mentioned (above, sec. 267); as to the third letter, only a fragment has remained. Furthermore: there is a letter, whose date has not been preserved, apparently also of Daniel b. Eleazar, written to Samuel's father, Mevorakh. Another letter, written apparently to Mevorakh b. Samuel al-Barqūlī, in Shevat, Sel. 1518, January 1207, deals with the appointment of a *dayyān*—it should be assumed in Wāsiṭ—without the gaon's consent. The *dayyān*'s name was Abū Yāsir b. Tūvia, whom the gaon considers to be lacking in halachic knowledge. This Abū Yāsir won the support of Neṣaḥ al-Ifranjī, i.e., the European (whom I have already mentioned above, sec. 267), an ignoramus (*jāhil*). The gaon demanded that the letter be read to the communities of Wāsiṭ and environs, explaining that

²⁷² Benjamin of Tudela in Rome: Borchardt, *JRS*, 26 (1936), 68ff.; the conquest of Rayy: Benjamin of Tudela, 55; David al-Rō'i, *ibid.*, 51; see Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 394-396. Loeb, *REJ*, 16 (1888), 215 ff.; *dār al-kufr*, see Bosworth, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 141; see Bar Hebraeus, the *Chronicle* (Bedjan), 204; (Budge), 266f.; he explains that *turk kāfir* refers to the Huns, who did not accept Islam. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, X, 96f.: the first defeat: *ibid.*, 152; the second: see Bosworth, *ibid.*, 135-153; Koymen: 176-179; 621ff.; 650f.; see also Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 12f.; Davidson, *Sefer sha'ash.*, cvff. There are more details that may help to establish the chronology of Benjamin of Tudela's travels: the mention of the king of Armenia, Thoros, see Benjamin, 18, "Armenia is where the kingdom of Thoros begins". Thoros died in 1168, see Runciman, *Hist.*, 289; the mention of the earthquake which destroyed Tripoli in Syria: "in an earlier time, there was an earthquake in Tripoli and many, both gentiles and Jews, died", *ibid.*, 19. Before this, he mentioned the Arabic name of the city, *rwblws al-shām*. Prawer, *Cathedra*, 40 (1945/6), 47, cites William of Tyre, *RHC* (Occ.), XX, 18, about the earthquake in Tripoli in June 1170 (this was already mentioned earlier, by Adler, the editor of Benjamin, in the English part of his book, 17). However, Benjamin certainly intended the earthquake that occurred there on 9 August 1157, described by Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, XI, 218, who mentions Tripoli among the cities that were destroyed, insisting mainly on the collapse of the city's walls, exactly as does Benjamin: "the houses collapsed and the walls over them"; obviously Benjamin visited there before the earthquake of the 28th (which is the correct date) of June, 1170, which is also described by Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid.*, 354, who, however, does not mention Tripoli there. It appears, therefore, that Benjamin visited the Byzantine regions and the north of Syria in about 1166-1167 (some ten years after the Tripoli earthquake of 1157); cf. also Dinur (Dinaburg), *Zion (ha-me'assēf)*, 2 (1926/7), 442 n. 1.

he had delayed the appointment of a *dayyān* simply because he had not found the proper person for this position. All the other letters contain blessings, they brim with flowery language; only in one of them are there unexplained matters regarding a man who should visit the yeshiva, a person hailing from Samuel b. Mevorakh's town. Samuel b. al-Barqūlī is the man who supported al-Ḥarīzī so that he could write his *Taḥkemōnī*, as stated in its introduction: "...God has chosen him, the prince singular in his generation.... glory of our generation.... his home is wide open to gladly receive all guests, he is the great prince.... Samuel b. al-Barqūlī", etc. There he also mentions the "two brothers (of Samuel), the esteemed prince R. Joseph and the pleasant prince R. Ezra"; al-Ḥarīzī means Samuel b. al-Barqūlī, when he writes about "the great *nagid* God's chosen, the prince Samuel, who is a tower of strength for his entire nation, in all the land of Shinar, he alone.... and his two brothers are braids of gold"; he found them in the city *tawekh* ('middle' in Hebrew, i.e., Wāsiṭ in Arabic). Fourteen poems dedicated to "the esteemed leader" Abū Naṣr R. Joseph b. al-Barqūlī were written by Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian; also mentioned in one of them is his brother "Samuel the *gevūr*" (important person). There is also a remnant of a poem that Eleazar b. Jacob dedicated to "the leader Abū'l-Ghanā'im (as it should be read) b. al-Barqūlī. He writes in one of the poems, when comparing Joseph b. Mevorakh to the biblical Joseph: 'do not compare Noph and Tahapanes (i.e. Egypt, see Jer. 2:16) with *tawekh*'" (Wāsiṭ), leading Brody to conclude that the city of Wāsiṭ (=middle, *tawekh*, as said above) was meant, to which may also be added the preamble of one of the poems: "he also wrote this one, to Joseph b. al-Barqūlī in Wāsiṭ".²⁷³

(274) One of the outstanding Babylonian personalities at the beginning of the thirteenth century, was DANIEL B. SAADIA AL-AMSHĀṬĪ, also known as Daniel the Babylonian. He was the student par excellence of the gaon, Samuel b. Eli. He is mentioned in a note of the copier of the Genesis and Exodus commentary of Maimonides' son, Abraham, in the commentary on Genesis 32:2 ("And when Jacob saw them, he said"); here Abraham men-

²⁷³ See the letters to Ibn al-Barqūlī, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (3.1929/30), 41-43, 55f., and see the editor's notes. In the first letter he is called al-Thiqa (p. 42, line 10); on p. 55, line 20, he calls his father Mevorakh: *ne'eman ha-malkhūt* ("trustee of the kingdom"), *tiḥeret ha-sārīm* ("pride of the princes"), the same on p. 56, line 8, where there is an addition: *sar ha'edā* ("prince of the community"), *hōd ha-sārīm* ("glory of the princes"), *āṭeret ha-leviyīm* ("crown of the Levites"), *segūlat ha-yeshivā* ("precious of the yeshiva"); whereas in those places Samuel himself is called *shams al-ru'asā* ("sun of the leaders"), *pe'er ha-leviyīm* ("pride of the Levites"), *hemdat ha-yeshivā* ("beloved of the yeshiva"); on p. 49, lines 17-18, Mevorakh: *sar ha'edā* ("prince of the community"), *ne'eman ha-malkhūt* ("trustee of the kingdom"), *hōd ha-sārīm* ("glory of the princes") *āṭeret ha-leviyīm* ("crown of the Levites"), *segūlat ha-yeshivā* ("precious of the yeshiva"); on p. 50, lines 10-11: *mu'tamid al-dawla* ("support of the state"), *amin al-mulk* ("trustee of the kingdom") *jamāl al-ru'asā* ("ornament of the leaders"). The fragment of the letter: in Assaf, *ibid.*, 55; the letters to Mevorakh: *ibid.* (3), 49f. (the text which begins *ibid.*, 51, is not the continuation of the letter to Mevorakh b. al-Barqūlī, but a separate letter, since it says there (Mann's reading): *mu'tamid al-mulk* ("support of the kingdom"), "our Lord and Master Khalaf", see Mann, *Texts*, I, 224 n. 52; 268 n. 13). The other letter: *ibid.*, 60-65. See al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemōnī*, 16f., 366 (no. 46). Joseph b. al-Barqūlī: see Eleazar b. Jacob, 53-55 (nos. 164, 165); 95f. (nos. 213, 214 and see there the matter of *tawekh*, 95 n. 6 of the editor); 39f. (nos. 113-117); 42f. (nos. 121-125); Abū'l-Ghanā'im b. al-Barqūlī is mentioned also in the superscript of a poetical fragment, see *ibid.*, 55 n. 9; also: Abū'l-Ma'ālī: *ibid.*, 42 (no. 120).

tions the opinion of his father, Maimonides, in the "Guide for the Perplexed", that here there is a hint about what will be coming in the Torah regarding the struggle between Jacob and the Angel; the copier added that this view is similar to that of Daniel b. al-Amshāṭī, author of the book *al-taḳwīm* (the rectification), where he disagrees "with our Master Moses (i.e., Maimonides), in this and other matters". Also mentioned, is a responsum that Maimonides' son Abraham replied to "Daniel, the extremely wise.... son of Saadia the esteemed elder" etc.; in the preamble of that responsum it says that it is a response to Daniel the Babylonian. That responsum is included in a treatise written by Abraham regarding Daniel's disagreements with the 'Code' of Maimonides, *Birkat Avraham* (Blessing of Abraham); as to the treatise *ma'asē nissīm* (miraculous acts), Abraham wrote it in response to Daniel the Babylonian's disagreements with Maimonides' "Book of Precepts".

Maimonides, in his letter to Baghdad, to his student Joseph Ibn ʿAqnīn, reminds him that it should reach "Ibn al-Mashshāṭ of al-Hind (India)"; especially prominent is the fact that al-Mashshāṭ is none other than al-Amshāṭī. In "The wars of the Lord", we see Abraham b. Maimonides' statements (of 1235) about "one of the students of our Master Samuel, head of the yeshiva of Babylonia, of blessed memory, by the name of Daniel the Babylonian, who came from Babylonia to Damascus", who wrote a treatise criticizing Maimonides' 'Code' and his "Book of Precepts"; he sent the treatise to Maimonides' son Abraham, who sent back excuses regarding his reservations, thinking that it was the end of the story; but from a letter sent to him by a student of Maimonides, the aforementioned Joseph b. Judah, of Halab, we learn that this Daniel wrote a commentary to Ecclesiastes, where "he moved his tongue" against Maimonides and "the early geonim"; then Abraham relates that Joseph suggested that he excommunicate Daniel; Abraham refused to do so, because he considered himself to be a partisan in the issue, and since the argument was not with a heretic, only with someone who had reservations, who disagreed with Maimonides only "regarding devils and related matters". Indeed, views had changed since the time of Hayy Gaon, who mocked the belief in devils; now, two hundred years later, the student par excellence of the Baghdad gaon took up the cudgels in defense of the belief in devils (so it is implied). Maimonides' son Abraham also writes that he had received information that "he (Daniel) gave public Torah sermons and drew people to the awe (of God) and influenced sinners to repent". Further along he notes that, nevertheless, the exilarch David banned Daniel and forced him to repent; and that later, Daniel died, in Damascus ("he became ill and ended his days in Damascus"). The argument between Abraham and Daniel the Babylonian, took place between Adar and Av, Sel. 1524, January-July 1213.

Judah al-Ḥarīzī mentions Daniel, whom he met in Damascus; "there I saw the great scholar Daniel the Babylonian, he is a brimming well, felling cedars with his wisdom, felling the mighty".²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ See the commentary of Abraham Maimuni (the E. Wiesenberg edition), 105; see *ibid.*, n. 11, the explanation about this addition; cf. Poznanski, *REJ*, 33 (1896), 308ff.; see his responsum to Daniel ha-Bavli: *Birkat avrāhām*, 2f. *Birkat avrāhām* and *Ma'asē nissīm* were edited by B. Goldberg (Lyck 1864/5, Paris 1866/7); see the introduction of the editor, A.H. Freimann, *Teshūvōt* (of Abraham Maimuni), xiii, and cf. Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 227

(275) Al-Ḥarīzī, when describing *‘adīna*, i.e., Baghdad, “where the fine meal is gone and the chaff present”, mentions “the foremost of all their great ones, JOSEPH B. SHEVER (=Hebrew breach; the correct name: Shibr), I have not seen him and he has not seen me.... his Maker detested him, and so he detests me” etc. We would know nothing of this Ibn Shibr, if not for Ibn al-Sā’ī, who mentions Abū Ṭāhir b. Shibr, who was the *jahbadh* of the “exalted *diwān*”, and was the “leader of the Jews”; he tells us that the latter died on the last day of Ramaḍān 601, i.e., 21 May 1205, and that his body was transported to the Mount of Olives for burial. In another place he presents the same fact, but now this is about Abū Ghālib b. Abī Ṭāhir b. Shibr; this may possibly be a father and his son, and both of them may have died within a year. As his title, *al-jahbadh*, shows, Abū Ṭāhir was in charge of monies, kind of a treasury minister, of Caliph al-Naṣr, and clearly a kind of representative and intercessor for the Jews with the authorities (whereas the actual head of the Jews was the Baghdadi gaon). When he writes about Abū Ghālib b. Abī Ṭāhir b. Shibr, Ibn al-Sā’ī says of him, that he was a kind of *‘āmil dār al-ḍarb*, i.e., in charge of the mint.

The student par excellence of Samuel b. Eli, was JACOB B. ELI, known in the sources as Jacob *rēsh bē rabbānān*. Samuel b. Eli refers to him as “our dear and chosen, esteemed, wise, and humble student the *dayyān*, our Lord and Master Jacob, the student of our scholars.... son of our Master Eli, of blessed memory”; he dispatches him to the communities to determine why they have not paid their due; it appears that he was the gaon’s regular emissary to the communities, both in spiritual and mundane matters, as shown by Samuel b. Eli’s letters of 1184-1187. Assaf published ten of Jacob’s responsa, locating therein a clear sign of Babylonia’s decline at that time, when compared with the early Babylonian geonim; “a sizeable part of the queries are those of unlearned people”, Assaf says. Jacob b. Eli also penned a treatise on the laws of animal slaughter, a sheet of which has been preserved, with the title: “laws of animal slaughter, a treatise of our Lord and Master, the *rav* par excellence, *rōsh bē rabbānān*, son of our Master Eli the pious (*he-ḥāsīd*) of righteous blessed memory”. Jacob b. Eli

(no. 165), who identifies Daniel b. al-Amshāfī with Daniel b. Saadia, and see the opposing view of Wiesenberg (above in this note). Ibn al-Mashshāt: see in Maimonides’ *Iggerōt* (Shailat), 299; and see the Baneth edition (1945/6), 70, and the editor’s note to line 18. The name al-Amshāfī, and its variations, are mentioned in several Geniza documents, such as: “Abū’l-Fakhr al-‘Aṭṭār (the perfumer, or druggist), known as Ibn al-Amshāfī” in Fustat, in 1162, see: Mann, *Jews*, II, 293; see also Ashtor, *Tōledōt*, I, 183, who explains that the name means: a maker of combs, but this is not certain, and it appears to be connected with textiles, with ‘combing’ the flax; see more examples of this name: Poznanski (above in this note). See Abraham Maimonides, in Maimonides, *Qoveṣ*, III, 16d. See al-Ḥarīzī, *Tahkemoni* (Kaminka edition 509; Kaminka has included additions and corrections based on BL Add 27,112f.; the passage is not included in Toporowski’s edition). Perhaps Eleazar Ben Jacob, 15 (no. 11), referred to this Daniel: “Daniel my sir, a man greatly beloved (after Dan. 10:11, 19)... he wears wisdom like garments”; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 167; he assumes that Daniel b. al-Amshāfī is identical to Daniel *segan he-yeshivā* in Eleazar Ben Jacob; but this is doubtful. See also the letter of “Daniel ha-Bavli son of Saadia, a righteous man of blessed memory”, dated to Adar Sel. 1522 (Feb.-March 1211), TS 24.41, ed. Mann, *Texts*, I, 409ff., and see his comments, *ibid.*, 401ff. The letter contains greetings to “the Master R. Abraham”; it mentions “a scholar of ours named R. Yefet”, as if he were one of the yeshiva people. Goitein, *Letters*, 57, calls the letter’s writer “a French rabbi”, for a reason unknown to me.

died before Sel. 1522, AD 1211, but the exact date is not known. Joseph, his son, lived in Egypt, much has been written of him, but this is beyond the framework of this book.²⁷⁵

(276) The Ibn Kammūna family was, apparently, one of oldest and best established families in Babylonia. From the writings of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, we know about SA'D B. MANŠÜR, I.E., 'IZZ AL-DAWLA ABU'L-RIDĀ SA'D B. NAJM AL-DAWLA MANŠÜR B. SA'D B. AL-HASAN B. HIBAT ALLAH B. KAMMŪNA; Sa'd b. Manšūr Ibn Kammūna was a Baghdadi, an eye doctor with an extensive education, an expert rhetorician and logician; he was one of the commentators of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and wrote a commentary on his *kitāb al-ishārāt* ("book of directives"). He was held in high public esteem. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī expresses sorrow that he did not succeed in getting to know him personally, but corresponded with him in 683, i.e., 1284/5, the year of Sa'd b. Manšūr's death. Elsewhere, he relates the events in Baghdad when it was learned of one of Ibn Kammūna's treatises, *tanqīḥ al-abḥāth lil-milal al-thalāth* ("a revision of the studies about the three religions"), that according to rumors had pejorative views about the prophets. There was rioting and his head was on the line; when steps were taken to put him on trial, he hid and escaped to Hilla, where his son filled a government post, and where he died some time later (actually, in that same year). Characteristic of the Mongol period when the rulers were not Muslims, in contrast to the masses of the people, is the fact that no real effort was made

²⁷⁵ See al-Harīzī, *Tahkemonī*, 365f. (no. 47). Ibn al-Sā'ī, 162f.; cf. Fischel, *Jews*, 133; Ben-Jacob, *Zion*, 15 (1950), 57f., assumed that this Abū Tāhīr might be Abraham "head of the ninth yeshiva", mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 39. Ben-Jacob explains that he was 'the banker' of al-'Azīz, but we know of no official called al-'Azīz in that period; *al-'azīz* (the exalted) refers to the *dīwān*, 'the ministry'. Possibly this Ibn Shībr family also included Abū 'Alī b. Shefer, who is the object of the poem of praise, no. 41, in Eleazar Ben Jacob, 23, and it is reasonable to assume that *shībr* is but Hebrew *shefer*; cf. also: Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē bāvel*, 39. See also Fischel, *Tarbiz*, 8 (1936/7), 235. Jacob b. Eli in the letters of Samuel b. Eli: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2.1929/30), 52; 53 ("our pupil, the *dayyān*"); 54 ("*naibnā al-dayyān*, our attorney"); 56; 58; *ibid.*, part 3, 40. Jacob's responsa: Assaf, *Mi-sifr. ha-g.*, 162-170, and see especially his introduction, *ibid.*, 162-164. He also bore the title *rōsh kallā*. See Mann, *Jews*, II, 382, who cites a manuscript (unspecified, in the ENA Collection), about a halachic query addressed to "our Master, leader of our generation, the sage of our time, our Lord and Master Jacob *rōsh bē rabbānān*, son our Master Eli, of blessed memory"; see also *idem.*, *ibid.*, I, 243; II, 310f.; *Texts*, I, 206, 215; in n. 29 (on p. 215), Mann notes that Jacob b. Eli is mentioned also in BL Or 5536, in the matter of a dispute he had with "the scholar Ezra b. *al-hazzān* Manasseh", in 1181. It seems that it is Jacob b. Eli who migrated from Baghdad to Fustat; anyway, it is clear that his son, Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*, lived in Fustat and became known through his works and his many copies, for a peculiar handwriting, of which many examples are preserved in the Geniza. Rules of *sheḥita*, TS 8 F 3, f. 1, see Mann, *Jews*, II, 312; see also: Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 403, 413f., where he edited TS Loan 118, where it says "the pericope *kī tāvō* ('when thou art come', beginning Deut. 26:1), from the great learning book [*talmūdā rabbā*] written by... Joseph, the great *rav*, *rōsh ha-seder*, may his glory be exalted... written by our Lord Joseph, head of the yeshiva *ge'on ya'aqōv*, son of our Lord Jacob, *rōsh bē rabbānān*, the righteous of blessed memory". This passage, written in the handwriting which is peculiar to Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*, makes us doubt whether indeed it is Joseph who wrote all these sayings by himself, or he had a copyist working for him; cf. Abramson, *Sinai*, 11 (1941/43), 73; *idem*, *Kiryat sefer*, 26 (1949/50), 72-95; see *ibid.*, 72 and n. 7, mention of him with the blessing for the deceased, with a comprehensive discussion about Joseph b. Jacob; see a number of articles about Joseph b. Jacob: Allony, *Kiryat sefer*, 38 (1962/3), 531ff.; Scheiber, *Lōw Mem. Vol.* (Hebrew part), 158ff.; *idem*, *Tarbiz*, 33 (1963/4), 369ff.; *Kiryat sefer*, 44 (1968/9), 546ff.; see L. Ginat, R. Joseph, etc., Master's thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1989/90.

to apprehend Ibn Kammūna, just that the authorities made do with a falsified statement that Ibn Kammūna was sentenced to the stake and that the sentence was due to be carried out the following day; this statement assuaged the masses who then returned to their daily affairs.

Among the yeshiva letters published by Assaf, there is a letter of the head of the yeshiva, Daniel b. Eleazar, written in Tishri, Sel. 1518, September 1206, where mention is made of ABŪ'L-MA'ĀLĪ B. KAMMŪNA, one of those the gaon thanks for their efforts on behalf of the yeshiva. Ibn al-Sā'ī mentions "ABŪ GHĀLIB B. KAMMŪNA the Jew, who died in AH 601, AD 1204/5, in (the area of) the granary of Wāsiṭ"; according to him this Abū Ghālib would force the signature of Ibn Muqla(?).

Some of Ibn Kammūna's polemical treatises were published by L. Hirschfeld. Baneth conducted a thorough discussion of the ideational content of his treatise on the three religions, and even though he did not find irrefutable evidence that Ibn Kammūna did not convert to Islam, he nevertheless proves that his discussion of Islam could not have been penned by a believing Muslim, whereas there is a great deal of devotion in his discussion of Judaism. Neither does the passage in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī say anything about conversion to Islam; had he converted to Islam, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī would not have ignored this fact. Perlmann, who published a scholarly edition of his treatise on the three religions, noted that four years had passed since 1280, when the treatise was written (as we know from its manuscripts), until that mass rioting in Baghdad, in 1284; he raised the possibility that this was tied to changes among the Mongol rulers, when Nikūdar, brother of Abāqā (1265-1282), who was his brother's successor, converted to Islam and was removed from power in favor of Abāqā's son, Arghūn (1284-1291). Another treatise that has been preserved of Ibn Kammūna's writings, deals with the differences between the Rabbanites and the Karaites; the main idea being that because of the passage of time the motives for the schism had lost any meaning. According to Nemoy, it clearly shows the great influence of Judah ha-Levi's *Kuzārī* (the correct name: *al-Khazārī*). In any case the writer is totally on the side of the Rabbanites. He also wrote a treatise on the eternity of the soul, a photocopy of which was published by Nemoy, along with its English translation.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīṣ*, IV(1), 159f. (no. 189); *idem*, *Ḥawāḍith*, 441f.; Abū'l-Ma'ālī b. Kammūna: Assaf, *Tarbīz*, I (3.1929/30), 52. Abū Ghālib: Ibn al-Sā'ī, 165. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (*Talkhīṣ*, IV[2], 1154f., no. 1740) mentions Gharas al-dawla, father of Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr b. Hibat Allah b. Kammūna al-Isrā'īlī al-Baghdādī, whom he knew personally and enjoyed the encounter with him and his hospitality; see Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, 239f.; Fischel, *MGWJ*, 79 (1935), 319ff.; Baneth, *MGWJ*, 69 (1925), 295ff.; Perlmann, *Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr*; see *ibid.* the editor's introduction, ix-xii; Nemoy, *REJ*, 123 (1964), 507ff. Harkavy mentions a manuscript he saw in Jerusalem, of "an Arabic tract about the different creeds, by Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr, in which there are some valuable things", see his *Ḥad. gam Yesh.* (reprint), 101 (no. 27). The tract about the differences between Rabbanites and Karaites: Nemoy, *Tarbīz*, 24 (1955), 343f.; *idem*, *Elfenbein Jub. Vol.*, 201f.; survival of the soul: Goldziher, *Steinschneider Festschr.*, 110ff.; Nemoy, *Goldziher Mem. Vol.*, II, 83-99. Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr's book, *Tanqīḥ al-abḥāth*, is mentioned by Ḥājī Khalīfa, I, 495, who also mentions tracts written to disprove his ideas, inclusive of a tract by Māwardī, written about 100 years later, entitled (approximately) "the rapid feat including a review of how to deal with the most wicked among the Jews". This also serves as a proof that Ibn Kammūna was considered a Jew and there is no mention of his having converted, *pace* Goldziher (above, in

(277) During the time of Mongol rule, there were two Jewish figures who played a central role in the life of the kingdom. The first among them was SA'D AL-DAWLA B. AL-ŞAFĪ, i.e., Şafī al-dawla b. Hibat Allah b. Muhadhdib al-dawla (Mūsā; see also above, sec. 252.) According to Ibn Khaldūn, Sa'd al-dawla's first name was also Sa'd. The family originated in Abhar in the North of Persia. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī also mentions his three brothers, Mahdhdhib al-dawla, Amīn al-dawla, Fakhr al-dawla. The last one of these, whose full name was ILIYĀ IBN ŞAFĪ AL-DAWLA IBN HIBAT ALLAH IBN MŪSĀ (Muhadhdib al-dawla), was Sa'd al-dawla's attorney when he was appointed the vizier of the sultan Arghūn b. Abāqā b. Hūlāgū. It should be noted that during Mongol times the laws about the protected people were disregarded, because the Mongols practiced religious tolerance and did not discriminate between Muslims and *dhimmīs*; in the first generations, they were not Muslims. Arghūn, especially, displayed an attitude of lack of trust towards the Muslims and barred them from filling state posts.

According to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, Sa'd al-dawla was a physician, as is also shown by other sources; yet according to Abū'l-Fidā', he was first an agent (*dallāl*) in the Mosul artisans market. In 682 (AD 1283/4), Arghūn appointed him to the Mongol state service, and he remained in the post until near the time of Arghūn's death, in 690 (AD 1291). He first worked in Baghdad, then in Tabriz, the Mongol capital; for as a physician, and a talented administrator, he aroused the jealousy of many courtiers, and after the request of Qutluḡ Shāh, commander of the army, he was transferred from Baghdad to Tabriz in 1288. When he became one of Arghūn's courtiers, he concentrated much power in his hands, especially because he was also his personal physician. Gradually, by removing corrupt officials and through considerable improvements that he instituted in the state's fiscal administration, his position consolidated, and in 1289, he himself managed the Mongol empire's state apparatus, clearing it of his opponents, and appointing his associates in their place, especially members of his family. In the sources of the period there is praise for the way he administered state affairs and the proper methods he instituted, which led to a great improvement in the economic and security situation; he also supported and encouraged contemporary poets and scholars; writings are also attributed to him, including poems, and he reputedly authored a book whose details are unknown.

Sa'd al-dawla's fame spread far and wide in the Jewish diasporas, and according to the sources, he not only appointed local Jews to state posts, but also Jews from many venues gathered around him. R. Solomon b. Adret ('the Rashba'), a contemporary, in one of his responsa to a query deals with the matter of a man from Antioch who had possessions in Baghdad (in the text: in Babylon) and was required to pay tax over there because of his possessions. On the other hand, the king "ruling in Antioch and in Babylon", owed money to that Jew, "and the king had a Jewish treasurer in

this note), who assumed that he did. See also L. Hirschfeld's book about him (*Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr*, etc.), where he edited ch. ii of the *Tanqīḥ*. See also Hirschfeld, *Ar. Chrest.*, 69-103, where he edited the tract on the differences between Rabbanites and Karaites; it was edited again by Nemoy, *PAAJR*, 36 (1968), 107ff. Ben Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 40, mentions a manuscript ascribed to Ibn Kammūna, *al-jadīd fī 'l-ḥikma* ("novelties in science").

Babylon and ordered him to pay it for him", etc. It would not be much of a stretch of the imagination to assume that this was Sa'd al-dawla, "the Jewish treasurer".

On the other hand, as stated above, Muslim envy and hatred grew. There was even a rumor that Sa'd al-dawla advised Arghūn to turn the *ka'ba* into an idol-worshipping temple. Against the background of Jew hatred, and even the desire to purge the state apparatus of Jews and Christians, there were also secret societies that plotted to murder the rulers who employed non-Muslims in high posts. There were also groups in the Mongol ruling stratum who opposed Sa'd al-dawla against the background of internal power struggles. Arghūn's severe illness brought about a massacre in which Sa'd al-dawla and many of his company were murdered. Sa'd al-dawla was murdered on the last day of Šafar 690, 3 March, 1291, two weeks before Arghūn's death. Following the murder there was a wave of arrests and executions of Sa'd al-dawla's relatives and associates. This led to a real battle in Baghdad between Muslims and Jews. Riots and attacks against the Jews broke out in many places. It is Bar Hebraeus who correctly explained the attacks as resulting from the extreme change that had then occurred in the Jews' situation. As far as the Arabs were concerned, the Jews could only be hide tanners, textile dyers or tailors, even though there were physicians and officials among them (the Jews do not disdain any work he writes), but now their status had risen considerably (as it is implied).²⁷⁷

(278) RASHĪD AL-DĪN, statesman and writer, was among the most important people in the Mongol state at the end of the thirteenth and the

²⁷⁷ See Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 450f., 454, 457f., 461, 464f.; cf. Fischel, *Jews*, 90-117, who devotes an entire comprehensive chapter of his book to him, and cites additional sources, still in manuscript; his name Sa'd: Ibn Khaldūn, *ʿIbar*, V, 546, cf. Poliak, *Zion*, 3 (1938), 85. The city Abhar in the Media region was located to the west of Qazwīn, and inhabited mainly by Kurds; see Le Strange, *Lands*, 221f., and see Abhar on the map there, facing p. 185; see also: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīs*, III, 128, (no. 2014), and see there the editor's note; Bar Hebraeus, the *Chronicle*, 561f., 569, 575f., 582f., and the translation by Budge: 478f., 484, 490f., 496. Sa'd al-dawla was a *dallāl*: Abū'l-Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, IV, 17f.; Arghūn's death: *ibid.*, 26; Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, I (3), 714; regarding Sa'd al-dawla's omnipotence, it is worth looking at what Bar Hebraeus, *ibid.*, 490/575 has to say about him: the Jew (Sa'd al-dawla) went on from one success to another, reaching the summit of glory and honor, while disregarding the Mongol personalities and reducing the finances handled by them. Any man who had previously enjoyed some influence was now hindered from any access to the royal court, except Jews. Jews from all corners of the world were gathering around him, feeling as if they had reached the days of salvation. See Rashīd al-dīn, *Jāmīʿ*, II (2), 138ff., on the activities of Sa'd al-dawla in Baghdad and his achievements in tax collection there; *ibid.*, 150f., we find out how he was appointed vizier by Arghūn; *ibid.*, 152, how he appointed his brothers Fakhr al-dawla, Muhaddhīb al-dawla, and Amin al-dawla, as governors in Baghdād and in Diyār Bakr; his cousin, Muhaddhīb al-dawla Abū Maṣnūr, who was a physician, was appointed as governor in Tabrīz; *ibid.*, 153, praise of his efficiency and know-how in finances; *ibid.*, 161, on the looting of the houses of Muslims and Jews when the army found out that Arghūn was about to die. Solomon b. Adret, *Resp.* (Livorno), 65a (no. 270); cf. Ben-Jacob, *Sinai*, 8 (1944/5), 331f.; see also Howorth, III, 313f., 333, 341-343; (according to him Sa'd [he has: Sa'd] al-dawla was executed by decapitation, on 29 February 1291), 345, 396; Spuler, *Mongolen*, 246f.; Poliak, *Zion*, 2 (1936/7), 256f., attempted to prove that Sa'd al-dawla was vizier in AH 682-711, AD 1283-1311, and, contrary to what is said in the sources, that he was not executed in 1291, but fled, and later returned, this on the basis of Maqrīzī and Rashīd al-dīn (his references are unclear), see *ibid.*, 271f.

beginning of the fourteenth centuries. His full name was Faḍlallah b. Abī'l-Khayr b. Ghālī. The component of *al-dīn* in his name is an indication that he had converted to Islam, otherwise we would see: *al-dawla*. Nevertheless, Bar Hebraeus refers to him as Rashīd al-dawla; according to him, he was appointed to supervise the supplies of the Mongol ruler, the *Īl khān*, Jaykhātū (Arghūn's brother [1291-1295]), so that nothing would be wanting. "This Jew" wasted a lot of his own money on sheep and cattle, and employed many butchers and cooks, on condition that every month he would be compensated out of the tax money. But there was a considerable delay in tax income, the treasury was empty, and Rashīd al-dīn had already squandered all of his possessions and could not meet the demands of his office, thus he left the post and escaped with his life.

Rashīd al-dīn was born in the middle of the thirteenth century, in Hamadhān, the biblical Achmetha. He was the son of a Jewish perfume merchant (*ʿaṭṭār*), and converted to Islam at age 30; it appears that he then entered the employ of the *Īl khān* Abāqā (1265-1281), around 1275; in 1298, he is mentioned as the aide of the vizier Ṣadr al-dīn Zanjānī, while the *Īl khān* then was the grandson of Abāqā, Ghāzān. In the wake of court intrigues, in which Rashīd al-dīn played a major role, the ruler fired the vizier, Ṣadr al-dīn, and had him executed, appointing Rashīd al-dīn in his place. Rashīd al-dīn's advancement was due to his being Ghāzān's physician. Ibn Ḥajar lauds his dedication to Islam and the Muslims; he was the overseer of great construction projects in Persia, especially building *khanqas* (ṣūfī clubs) and *madrasas* (schools). In the end he was accused of causing the death of Kharbandā (or Uljaytu, the *Īl khan*: 1304-1316), Ghāzān's brother and his heir, through improper drugs, and executed a short time after Kharbandā's death (in Ramaḍān 716, December 1316). According to Ibn Ḥajar, "his body was torn apart and an organ sent to every city, and they left the rest of his body. His head was transported to Tabrīz, and it was declared: this is the head of the Jew who strayed from the religion". Maqrīzī, a contemporary of Ibn Ḥajar (first half of the fifteenth century), added that Rashīd al-dīn's execution (he, too, refers to him as Rashīd al-dawla) took place on 19 Ramaḍān 718, 14 December 1318. Quatremère, in his edition of Rashīd al-dīn's history of the Mongols, brings more details, taken from manuscripts. In light of the accusation of having poisoned the *Īl khān*, Rashīd al-dīn claimed that it was due to this man and his brother (Ghāzān), that he had attained his high position when he was at a low stage, so how could he possibly have poisoned his benefactor? Yet Jalāl al-dīn, another physician of the sultan's (apparently also Jewish in origin) testified against Rashīd al-dīn; one of Rashīd al-dīn's sons was executed before his father and in front of his eyes when he was only 16. Rashīd al-dīn was 73 at his death. One hundred years after his death, the governor of Tabrīz transferred his remains from where they were interred (a place he had prepared for himself while still alive), and had them reinterred in the local Jewish cemetery. The accusation of religious heresy had its origins in a Qur'ān commentary treatise he had written along the lines of a philosophy known as *miṭṭah al-tafāsīr*, "the key of the commentaries" that was ascribed to him. It was further said that "thousands of thousands of dinars" were found to be in his possession. Beyond all of these details, it is clear that Jew hatred filled a significant role in determining Rashīd al-dīn's

fate; he was active at a time when the Mongol leaders, rulers of Persia, had already become Muslims (beginning with Ghāzān, 1295-1304).

Rashīd al-dīn made efforts to make sure that his works be preserved, and that what he wrote in Persian be translated into Arabic and the reverse, and prepared two copies of each text "on the finest Baghdadi paper, with the best, clearest and aesthetic calligraphy". He ordered that they be deposited in one of the central cities of the Islamic world. Except for the Qur'ān commentary, he wrote a book called *fawā'id sulṭāniyya*, "Royal lessons", basically discussions on religious and philosophical matters with Uljaytū; *as'ila wa-ajwiba*, "Questions and answers", a correspondence with Muslim and Byzantine scholars; *kitāb al-aḥyā' wa'l-āthār*, "Book of animals and monuments", on botanical, agricultural and architectural matters; *mukātābātī rashīdī*, "Rashīd's exchange of letters", regarding policy and financial matters, on which he wrote to his sons and to holders of state offices. His main book was *jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, "The assemblage of histories", that he wrote in two versions, one of them in three volumes, in 1306-1307, the other in four volumes, in about 1310.²⁷⁸

(279) Until now I have surveyed the information about personalities who left their mark in the sources in a relatively prominent way. Now I will discuss some others about whom very little is known; what should be noted is that not a small amount of fortuity was involved in the preservation of the sources and the information of the period with which we are dealing. Thus it is possible that someone who is mentioned in a single sentence in an Arabic chronicle, or in a few rhymes of the period's poets, was actually a very important person, either because of his status, or his contribution in the field of the humanities and education.

About the middle of the twelfth century, there is mention of ISAAC THE JEW, of Ghazna, in Sijistān, who apparently was in charge of the mines on behalf of Quṭb al-dīn Muḥammad b. 'Izz al-dīn Ḥusayn, brother of the region's ruler, 'Alā al-dīn Ḥusayn. We find that the ruler ordered him to turn two months of the Warsād lead mine's income over to the poet Aḥmad b. 'Umar b. 'Alī, al-Samarqandī, who is al-Nizāmī al-'Arūdī, in recompense for a pleasing set of rhymes that he composed.

A Baghdad Jewish physician, SAADIA HA-LEVI B. 'ALĪ, known as ABŪ'L-RIDĀ *al-ṭabīb* (=the physician), died in Siwan, Sel. 1506, May-June 1195; this is what is written on his tombstone.

Ibn al-Fuwaṭī mentions a contemporary (so it would seem) FAKHR AL-DAWLA ABŪ'L-BARAKĀT B. AL-MUFADDAL B. ABĪ'L-ḤUSAYN B. YŪSUF AL-ISRĀ'ĪLĪ AL-KARKHĪ AL-KĀTIB, i.e., a resident of the al-Karkh quarter of

²⁷⁸ Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronicle* (Bedjan), 582, 583; (Budge), 496; his main topic was taxes and finance, and he explains that *ṣāhib al-dīwān*, nearly a finance minister, issued an order at that time, to discontinue use of the normal means of payment, gold and silver, and use paper money only, which was called *chaw* (in the Syriac of Bar Hebraeus: *shaw*). See also Maqrīzī, *Sulūk*, II(1), 189f.; Quatremère's introduction to Rashīd al-dīn's book, xlii-xliv; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī, *Durar*, III, 205f. (no. 590); the name Kharbandā: see Boyle, *Successors*, 25, n. 68. See the summing up of the details concerning Rashīd al-dīn's life and writings and their publication, *ibidem*, 3-13; cf. Spuler, *Mongolen*, 247ff. and see Howarth, III, 537, 588f. (and there the opinion that he was not Jewish [denied by the sources I cited]). See also: Fischel, *Jews*, 118-125, with proofs that Rashīd al-dīn was originally a Jew (whose agnomen was Rashīd al-dawla); Poliak, *Zion*, 2 (1936/7), 257f., 270-272 (with notes regarding Fischel's above-mentioned work).

Baghdad, who was in the civil service; according to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, he was an expert in administration (*kitāba*), and a member of a distinguished family; he administered a number of Iraqi districts; he was also known by the name of: Ibn al-Sindī, thus it appears that his father had had a protracted stay in the Sind (northeast India).

Also mentioned by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī was GHARAS AL-DAWLA ABŪ MANŠŪR NAŠRALLAH B. ABŪ'L-WAFĀ' B. ABŪ'L-ṬAYYIB AL-BAŠRĪ AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, i.e., a Bašrian who moved to Baghdad; he was a learned man; he was involved in the murder of two of Abū'l-°Alā's sons (it is unclear which Abū'l-°Alā is meant; perhaps °Alā al-dīn al-Ḥusayn, ruler of Khurāsān, thus making the two murdered men his brothers, not his sons); he converted to Islam and bequeathed all of his possessions to the sultan (i.e., the Turcoman ruler, which one, precisely, has not been determined); this act made the people of Baghdad very angry. Not a single Jew attended his funeral, not even his brother, Muwaffaq al-dawla; Muwaffaq al-dawla is probably the exilarch Daniel b. David (above, sec. 260); i.e., that Našrallah was apparently a member of the exilarchic dynasty; it is impossible to determine the names of his ancestors because Ibn al-Fuwaṭī only recorded their *kunyas*.

According to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, one of the leaders of Baghdad's Jews was MUṬAMID AL-DAWLA ABŪ NAŠR B. ABŪ'L-KARAM, one of the Jews molested by Abū'l-Ṭulayq Maṭūq, who was Ibn Shuqayr al-Munkar, when he forced them to dismount the animals they were riding, events that took place between 1230-1240 (above, sec. 250). The members of this family, Banū Karam by name, are mentioned, in some of Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian's poems. There is a poem blessing Abū'l-Karam b. al-°Aṭṭār (perfume merchant), in honor of the marriage of his son, Abū Manšūr. There we learn that the name of the person whose *kunya* was Abū'l-Karam, was Joseph; other names are mentioned, as well, all of them, apparently, Joseph's sons: SAADIA, MOSES, SAMUEL AND EZRA. One poem is dedicated to Muṭamid al-dawla (whom Ibn al-Fuwaṭī calls) b. Karam, along with his Hebrew name: °Azariah, and the poem has fulsome praise for his generosity. There is also a dirge for the death of °Azariah (Muṭamid al-dawla) Karam. There he is called "°Azariah, fearer of God, head of the *negidīm*"; included here are words of consolation for the son, Samuel. He also has a poem dedicated to the birth of the sons of Abū'l-Karam Joseph, the aforementioned Saadia and Moses; also mentioned are Eleazar, Zechariah and two other people called Eleazar, and it appears that he added names from the family of Saadia's mother, Joseph's wife. Here we learn of the unusual nickname of Joseph's grandfather: al-°Aqrab (the scorpion), for it is in the preamble of the poem, which is a poem of blessing for Master ABŪ NAŠR B. ABŪ'L-KARAM B. AL-°AQRAB; in another dirge, where the family name, Banū Karam, is not mentioned, the poet bemoans the death of JOSEPH, i.e., Abū'l-Karam, the *pater familias* of the entire family.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ The Jew Isaac: Nizāmī (1910 edition), I, 53 (cf. *ibid.*, II, 59, the translation and the notes); (1949 edition), 61; Warsād (or Warshād), a district in the Ghūr, see *ibid.* (1949), 145 n. 34. See on Nizāmī: Rypka, *Camb. Hist. of Iran*, V, 620f.; cf. also Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 39. Saadia ha-Levi b. °Alī, see Ben-Jacob, *Zion*, 15 (1949/50), 68. Fakhr al-dawla, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīṣ* III, 132 (no. 2020). Gharas al-dawla, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *ibid.*, II, 1168f. (no. 1740). Muṭamid al-dawla: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādiṭh*, 150; cf. Fischel, *Tarbiz*, 8

(280) An Irbil resident, JOSEPH HA-KOHEN B. °ALĪ B. AARON, was a scribal copier, who copied (i.e., completed the copying) of Maimonides' "Guide for the Perplexed"—*dalālat al-ḥā'irīn*—on Wednesday, 8 Adar, Sel. 1586, 6 February 1275.

A person from Ḥalab who was living in Baghdad was SETH B. YEFET (as it should be read); he wrote a commentary on the Torah, *ḥem'at ha-ḥemdā*, "the desired butter", completing it on 5 Elul, Sel. 1596, 7 August 1285; it was an abridgement of his extended treatise, with a commentary on the Torah and the weekly prophetic pericope; "the desired writ of Israel and Judah", and in Arabic: *al-muntakhab*, 'the chosen'. He called himself: "I am Seth the physician son of Yefet the writer".

The members of the AL-MĀSHA°IRI family are also mentioned in the Arabic sources and also in the poems of Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian. According to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, ABŪ MANŠŪR MUHADHDHIB AL-DAWLA NAŠR (ISAAC) B. AL-MĀSHA°IRI was a fellow of Sa'd al-dawla (above sec. 277). In AH 688, AD 1289, he appointed him as a kind of governor of Baghdad and Iraq (together with Fakhr al-dawla, Sa'd al-dawla's brother). When Sa'd al-dawla was murdered, Našr-Isaac was also killed after enduring excruciating torture, in Baghdad. Eleazar b. Jacob the Babylonian, wrote a poem for ISAAC MUHADHDHIB AL-DAWLA B. AL-MĀSHA°IRI, on the occasion of the birth of his son, Eleazar, also mentioning two more of his sons, Eliezer and Obadiah. He also wrote a Hanukah poem, in honor of the *rayyis* Amīn al-dawla Abū Manšūr b. al-Māsha°irī; according to the *kunya* Abū Manšūr, it may be assumed that his Hebrew name was Eleazar, and he is indeed mentioned by this name in the first rhyme; he was apparently the son of Muhadhdhib al-dawla Isaac; also mentioned are the sons of Eleazar: EZEKIEL, ISAAH, AND ISAAC. Eleazar b. Jacob also wrote a poem in honor of Isaac "*nagid* of the generation", the "Lord whom temporal kings were consulting", "the Lord who planted a tree of praise in Babylonia and also let out shoots in the islands of the sea", this was apparently Muhadhdhib al-dawla Isaac. Another poem, in honor of the distinguished *rayyis* Muhadhdhib al-dawla b. Mordecai, mentions "Daniel the ark of the faith *ge'on ya'aqōv*"; it appears that this was the head of the yeshiva Daniel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Abī'l-Rabī°; this leads to the assumption that the poem was written shortly before 1250, and that this *rayyis* is none other than "Isaac, the lord, the desired praise" mentioned there, and that the name of al-Māsha°irī, the father of Muhadhdhib al-dawla was Mordecai.²⁸⁰

(1936/7), 235; *idem*, *Jews*, 134; *idem*, *MGWJ*, 79 (1935), 318. Joseph (Yehōsēf) and the others: Eleazar Ben Jacob, 63 (no. 176); Mu'tamid al-dawla: *ibid.*, 93f. (no. 219); the dirge over °Azariah: *ibid.*, 100-102 (no. 219); Saadia's birth: *ibid.*, no. 187; the dirge over Yehōsēf: *ibid.*, 102f. (no. 220); cf. Brody, *Hazofeh*, 6 (1921/2), 124ff. Karz al-dīn Ishaq b. Jibrīl al-Daylamī al-Būyḥī was mentioned by Poliak, *Zion*, 2 (1936/7), 265; Ashtor (Strauss), *Zion*, 4 (1938/9), 55 (and see his note 36); Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 42, argues that he was not a Jew, but of Persian-Daylamite extraction, as proven also by his agnomen al-Būyḥī, misread by Poliak as al-Yahūdī; see now the printed edition of Taghrī-Bardī's *al-Manhal*, II, 357f., on this Karz al-dīn al-Daylamī al-Būyḥī Ishaq b. Jibrīl; it was said of him that he was an astrologer; his time: AD 1212-1290; see also n. 83 on p. 42 in Ben-Jacob (above in this note), where Ḥaj Rībard should be corrected: Taghrī Bardī.

²⁸⁰ Irbil: see Neubauer, *Cat.*, no. 1237, cf. Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 46 n. 5. Seth b. Yefet: Poznanski, *OLZ*, 7 (1904), 266; see Wertheimer, *Ginzē yer.*, 3 (1861/2), 13b-15a, with selections from *Sefer ḥem'at ha-ḥemdā*, and see *ibid.*, p. 5, the preamble: "these are

commentaries by Seth b. Yefet for his two sons, Yefet and Moses; see for example, *ibid.*: 14b: *'we-ha-ḥēmār'* ('and they had brick for stone'; Gen., 11:3, in the story of the tower of Babel), is the pitch like melted tar which is extracted from wells found in the Valley of Siddim (Gen. 14:13, 'which is the salt sea') and in the land of Shinar... and is extracted also in Zaanan (Micah 1:11; Sa'anān, misprinted by Wertheimer), which is in the inheritance of Judah, (from here in Arabic:) and is therefore called in Arabic *qufr al-yahūd*'. See also: Ashtor, *Tōledōt*, I, 268; Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 42. Muhadhdhib al-dawla: Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Hawādīth*, 438, 457, 464f., cf. Fischel, *Jews*, 104, 115, with more references. This Muhadhdhib al-dawla Isaac was perhaps a relative (a son or a brother) of Sa'd al-dawla, as the agnomen of Sa'd al-dawla's grandfather was Muhadhdhib al-dawla as well. Eleazar Ben Jacob, 10 (no. 8), 59 (no. 171), 71, (no. 185), 107 (no. 228); see also: Mann, *Texts*, I, 268; Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 63, 64, n. 61.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF BABYLONIA AND PERSIA

(281) For the following discussion, I concentrated information on more than 100 localities in Iraq and Persia where Jewish communities existed at the time of the geonim; this is surely only a partial list. Based on the fact that Jews are mentioned also in rural localities, which certainly had small populations, we may assume that the Jewish population was distributed over the entire area of the eastern caliphate; undoubtedly included were many of those numerous communities mentioned in the talmudic literature, but not mentioned in the sources of the geonic period. We have no way of estimating the numerical scope of the Jewish population in these areas, but it definitely numbered in the hundreds of thousands.

Ṭabarī, when dealing with the events of the mid-ninth century AD, mentions, for example, a village of Jews on the Tigris. A number of times he mentions a canal, one of the major canals Babylonia was blessed with in those times, *al-nahr al-maʿrūf bi'l-yahūdī*, the canal named “the Jewish one”, which was apparently located near the Tigris estuary. There were some towns, or parts of them, called *al-Yahūdiyya*.

It should be noted that a number of great urban centers that were founded after the Arab conquest, such as Baghdad and Baṣra, also developed into cities with large Jewish populations. Māḥōzē, the capital of the Persian kingdom, had so many Jews that there were thoughts about whether to affix a *mezūzā* in the city walls. In the second half of the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela found Jews in their tens of thousands, thousands, and hundreds: Baghdad, 40,000; ʿUkbarā, 10,000; Ḥilla, 10,000; Mosul, 7,000; Kūfa, 7,000; Resen (i.e., Madāʾin), 5,000; Baṣra, 2,000; Iṣfahān, 15,000; Shīrāz, 10,000; while a few years after Benjamin, Petahiah of Regensburg found “in the land of Babylonia”, more than 600,000 Jews, the same in the land of Kūsh(?) and in Persia; according to him there were 30 synagogues in Baghdad. As opposed to the emigration movement from Babylonia, that we see in some periods, especially in the tenth century, there is also information on emigration to Babylonia: “and there are many Egyptians who come to Babylonia and live in ʿUkbarā or Nahrwānī, and become known a few years later as al-ʿUkbarī and al-Nahrwānī, and it is even not worth mentioning it”, writes one Babylonian gaon.

The Arab geographers of the tenth century, knew of the great importance of the Jews in Iraq and Persia; according to Iṣṭakhṛī, the Jews were in third place after the Christians and the Zoroastrians, while according to Muqaddasī, they were in second place, after the Zoroastrians, i.e., there were fewer Christians than Jews. Muqaddasī especially notes the great numbers of Jews in the area of Media (*Jibāl*). As we have seen, during the Mongol conquest (1258) there were in Baghdad 36,000 Jews paying the

poll tax, i.e., the overall Jewish population was about 200,000 people, and there were 16 synagogues.²⁸¹

(282) The city of BAGHDAD, was established, as is known, in 762; it was initiated as the caliphate government center by Caliph al-Manṣūr. However, there are a number of ancient sources that note the existence of a locality in that place, much before the city's foundation. In the Babylonian Talmud, a contemporary of Samuel's, Hūnā Bagdātā'ā (mid-third century AD), is mentioned; yet Rashi in one place explained it as: *ba'al agādā*, master of legends, but elsewhere he recognized that it meant Baghdad. In the literature of the geonic period, Baghdad is often called Babylon, even though they knew very well that the city of Babylon was situated elsewhere, as can be seen in Benjamin of Tudela's descriptions. As a florid expression, they called Baghdad, *ʿAdīnā*.

In the *Letter* of Sherira Gaon, we read: "After him (after our Lord and Master Samuel, son of our Lord and Master Naṭrūnai [as it should be read] Kahanā [=ha-Kohen], son of our Lord and Master Emūna became king; he was from Baghdad, from Tōtīrā [or: Tīfīrā] Bārā ['the external bridge'])". Naṭrūnai b. Emūna flourished from 755 to 761, in all events he served in the Pumbedita gaonate before the founding of Baghdad (762), and had certainly left Tōtīrā Bārā before becoming gaon. This, too, is apparently proof that the community of Baghdad had existed even earlier, and that Jews lived there.²⁸²

²⁸¹ The village on the Tigris: Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 869; the 'Jewish' canal: *ibid.*, 1900 (in Dastmaysān, the plain of Meyshān, i.e., the southeastern corner of Mesopotamia); *ibid.*, 1986, 2007, 2015, 2066. Māhōzē: the *mezūzā*: BT Yōmā 11a; "Ullā said: those gates of Māhōzē, if their doors were not closed (on Saturdays), they would be obliged to establish an *ʿerūv*" (a symbolic act of 'mixing' the area more than 2000 cubits from the city, so that one may exceed that distance on Saturdays), see *ʿErūvīn* 6b, cf. Rashi *ibid.*; cf. Baron, *SRHJ*, II, 204f.; III, 276. See Benjamin of Tudela, Index; cf. Assaf *Taq. ha-g.*, 17; Resen: cf. Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 198, 206, 310; it should be remembered that in the talmudic period, and also in the geonic, localities had biblical names, which are not in conformity with modern archeological research, therefore the disagreement *ibid.*, 206 n. 45, is no reason to deny the identification of Resen with Ctesiphon, which is Madā'in. See also Mez, 33f. The Babylonian gaon (perhaps Hayy Gaon): Harkavy, *Resp.*, 141 (no. 285), cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916), 472. See al-Iṣṭakhrī, 139; Muqaddasī, *Āqālīm*, 394, 414, 439; cf. Schwarz, *Iran*, 155, 859.

²⁸² Hūnā Bagdātā'ā: BT, *Shabbāt*, 147b; *ʿErūvīn*, 81b; *Ketubbōt*, 10b, and elsewhere. See Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 62f. (there in note 6 the reference has to be corrected; Nöldeke did not refer to the Palestinian Talmud). Rashi, *ba'al agādā*: *ʿErūvīn* 81b; but see his commentary to *Berākhot* 54b: "the name of his city is Baghdad, which is the most important city in Babylonia since the ruin of (the city of) Babylon"; cf. Berliner, *Beitr.*, 25. The origin of the name: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh* (MS Paris 5866), 276a: "there was an idol in the east called *bgh*, and where Baghdad now stands there was a village called *dād*, which the Persian king offered to one of the eunuchs; but the eunuch explained: *bagh dād* means the idol's gift"; Sibṭ then cites more curious explanations of the name, and concludes: "the place was known by this name (Baghdād) even before Abū Ja'far" (= Caliph al-Manṣūr); see also Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 678, with the names Baghdān, Maghdān, which are two out of seven appellations. At the beginning of the first century AD, Strabo mentions Bagadonia or Bagadania in southern Cappadocia in Asia Minor, at the foot of the Taurus; see his geographic treatise (*Geographia* 12.2.10 = C539); cf. Shaked, *Boyce Pres. Vol.*, 514ff., on the component Baga (= God) in Persian names, and on Bagadāna which means a temple; therefore one should assume that there was a temple in this place in antiquity, from which the name Baghdad is derived. See also Sarre u. Herzfeld, II, 103f., who mention that the city's beginning was in a village on the western bank of the Tigris; east of that village there took place—already in Persian times—the "Tuesday market" (*sūq al-thulathā*); cf. also:

(283) We have seen above (sec. 70), that according to Nathan the Babylonian, the place where the exilarch lived in Baghdad was called "the land of ʿAtīqā"; this is none other than *sūq al-ʿatīqa* that was in the center of the Jewish quarter of Baghdad. An act of the *bēt dīn* regarding the will of a moribund person, from Marheshwan, Sel. 1309, October 997, and drawn up at the court of Sherira Gaon, says that it was written "in the *shūqā ʿatīqā* of Baghdad". This was in the *al-sharqiyya*, i.e., eastern quarter, near the Tigris, actually on its western bank, i.e., it was in the eastern section of western Baghdad, east of the initial city built by al-Manṣūr; this section, *al-sharqiyya*, spread between the *tāq al-ḥarrānī* and the *bāb al-shaʿīr* (*tāq* = arch; *shaʿīr* = barley). Earlier, before the city of Baghdad was built, there was in that place a village, Sūnāyā. In that quarter there was also the tallest among the bridges over the Tigris, by the name of *qanṭarat al-yahūd* (Jews' bridge). Balādhurī, in his descriptions of the battles of conquest, says that Khālīd b. al-Walīd sent al-Muthannā b. Ḥāritha to capture the *sūq Baghdad*, i.e., *al-sūq al-ʿatīq* (ancient market), near the mouth of the Ṣarāḥ estuary; this had taken place over one-hundred years before the founding of the city of Baghdad. As for Ṭabarī, he notes that the *sūq Baghdad* was in the Karkh, thus we may conclude that the Karkh, where Jews and Shiites lived, was part of the *sharqiyya*, the southern part beyond the wall; actually, the three terms: *al-ʿatīqa*, the *sharqiyya*, and the Karkh, are connected and even overlap each other to a great extent. Evidence regarding the close proximity of the main quarter of Jews' residences to the Tigris, is also the fact that for a long period of time there was a breach in the Tigris dam, *bathaḡ al-yahūdī*, the Jew's breach, until it was dammed up by ʿAḍud al-dawla the Būyīd, in AH 372, AD 982/3.

Yāqūt, writing at the beginning of the thirteenth century, mentions the *darb al-yahūd*, "the street of the Jews" in Baghdad, but does not mention its location; according to him some Muslim scholars of law came from there, among whom he mentions the name of Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallah b. ʿUbaydallah b. Yaḥyā (above, sec. 242).²⁸³

Levy, *Baghdad Chron.*, 6ff.; Sourdell, *Arabica*, 9 (1962), 251f.; and see Judah b. Kalonymos, *Yihūsē t. wa-am.*, 129: Bagdāt is the city called ʿAdīna (Is. 47:8, where the Hebrew text reads: "therefore hear now this, ʿAdīna"); so also in the story of Obadiah the proselyte: "the king of ʿAdīna whose name is al-Muqtadī", see in Golb, *Goitein Jub. Vol.*, 99. This agnomen was known among Muslims as well (below sec. 309); Solomon Ibn Gabirol: "the horn of ʿAdīna was lopped off, ʿAdīna which is the lady among every *medīna*" (= city), in his dirge on Hayy Gaon, in his *Shīrē ha-hōl*, 62 (no. 111), cf. Rapoport, *Tōledōt*, I, 172 n. 7. *Tōlirā bārā* ("the external bridge"): Sherira, *Letter*, 103; cf. Brüll, *JJGL*, 2 (1876), 146; cf. on the meaning of *tōlirā*: TS 10 G 3 lines 3-6, in Ginzberg, *Ginzē Sch.*, II, 20. See Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 464f. It is perhaps "the bridge of the Jews", mentioned in Arabic sources; see also Lewin's note, in Sherira, *Letter*, 103.

²⁸³ *Al-ʿatīqa*, see Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 78, 80: "with the exilarch in *ereṣ ʿatīqā* in Babylon": "and already a compound was ready for him in a famous village, in *ereṣ ʿatīqā*, to live in". The act of the *bēt dīn*: see 29, lines 8-9. See also: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 613; Ibn al-Athīr, *Lubāb*, II, 17; Baghdādī, *Marāṣid*, II, 757, 919; cf. Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 90, who describes the Sharqiyya quarter: between the Baṣra road (and the Baṣra gate, the southern gate of the city), and the Tigris, above the quarter Qaṣr ʿIsā; there stood a building dedicated to ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, called Mashhad al-Mintaqa, or al-Mantiq; it was a center of the Shiites, who argued that ʿAlī prayed there; see also Le Strange, *ibid.*, 94, 150, 188; and see Obermeyer, 150, who assumed that an ancient Jewish locality, from the talmudic period, stood there. Canard, in the translation of al-Sūlī, 221, n. 6, assumed that this quarter was part of the Karkh, and called Sharqiyya (the eastern), since it was located to

(284) Ṭabarī, in describing the battle with many surprises run by Shabīb, the Khārījī commander, against the caliphate army, relates that Shabīb crossed the Tigris in the area of Karkh (in AH 76, AD 695/6, about 65 years before the founding of the city) and granted an *amān* to the people of *sūq baghdād*, because it was the day of the fair, after there was great alarm among the local inhabitants; his people wanted to make purchases in the market, therefore, he granted the *amān* to the local people. In the second half of the eleventh century, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī noted the way from the city gate, the aforementioned *bāb al-shaʿīr*, to the Karkh, which is the street (*darb*) *al-zaʿafarānī*; it appears that this street was built around the middle of the ninth century, because it was named for al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Zaʿfarānī, who died in AH 260, AD 874. The Karkh was also built at al-Manṣūr's order, when he ordered that all bachelors be removed from the "round city", i.e., the initial section of Baghdad, where the government buildings were. The reason is clear: security.

At the beginning of the ninth century, a process began of concentrating the houses of the rulers and the upper class on the eastern part of the Tigris. It was said that al-Ḥasan b. Sahl built for Caliph al-Ma'mūn the palace known by the name of *al-ḥusnā*, which became the abode of the caliphs, and the caliphs abandoned the western bank for good. However, we find that Jews also lived in areas west of the Tigris, as is testified by the matter of the fire that broke out in the eastern part of the city on a Sabbath, in 1108, while the Jews were away from their quarter because they used to spend the Sabbath in the western city (above, sec. 245). In the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela speaks of the "big city which is on the other side of the Tigris river, because the river divided the city"; from here, too, it is clear that the Jews lived also near the western bank of the Tigris, southwest of the "round city", and there, "between Baghdad and al-Karkh", the Jews had 28 synagogues. One-hundred years later, Qazwīnī writes about the *qarya*, village, "above Baghdad", whose inhabitants were Shiites and Jews, and where there were the paper (*kāghid*) and silk clothing (or: textile) shops. According to Obermeyer, the Karkh was the main section of Baghdad outside of the "round city", and derives the name of the quarter from *karkā*, *kerākh*, which mean city. For Sarre and Herzfeld, on the other hand, the Karkh had been in existence from the time of the Sasanid king Shābūr II, i.e., Dhū'l-Aktāf (AD 309-379).

the east of the Ṣarāh canal, between this canal and the Tigris. The Ṣarāh canal connected the main canal, Nahr 'Isā, with the Tigris; cf. also Lassner, *Topography*, 258 n. 56; Busse, *Chalif*, 482; Allard, *Arabica*, 9 (1962), 375; Kraemer, *Humanism*, 75. See Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 245. *Al-sūq al-ʿatīq*: Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 246; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 901, 914, on the events of AH 76, 695/6. See the article on the markets of Baghdad: Abel, *Bull. de la soc. belge d'ét. géogr.*, 9: 148, (1939), and the map there, after p. 150. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 13: the name al-Sharqiyya meant that it was east of the Ṣarāh. See Sarre u. Herzfeld, II, 146, and their suggestion about the location of al-ʿAtīqa in later periods. The "Jew's breach": Sibṭ, *Mir'āh* (MS Paris 5866), 97b; see Abū Shujāʿ, 69, who mentions the names of those who dammed up the breach and who was in charge of the dam, and states that the breach was in the Sahliyya canal; cf. Busse, *Chalif*, 158 n. 6, 381. *Darb al-yahūd*: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 1045. Two more places in Baghdad which appear to have been in the center of Jewish public life in the tenth century, were *dār* ("the house of") Abū Ghanm, and *darb al-baqar* ("the cattle alley"), mentioned in the calumnies against Saadia Gaon, see in Harkavy, *Zikkārōn la-rish*, V, 230.

Bāb al-shaʿīr, the main entrance into the Jewish quarter, was on the western bank of the Tigris and next to it. Hamadhānī, at the beginning of the ninth century, mentions a house on the Tigris next to *bāb al-shaʿīr*. In the thirteenth century, the passage was from the bridge into the quarter through the *shāriʿ* (street) *bāb al-ḥarrānī* and from there to the *shāriʿ* *bāb al-karkh*, where there was (had once been) a village by the name of Warthāl; al-Ḥarrānī (for whom the arch, *ṭāq al-ḥarrānī*, is also named) was a descendant of *mawālī*, i.e., Christians or Jews, who converted to Islam at the time of al-Manṣūr, and whose full name was: Ibrahīm b. Dhakwān b. al-Faḍl al-Ḥarrānī; He may have been a descendant of a Jewish family. The name of the village, Warthāl, is not mentioned anywhere else; it was apparently a scribal corruption, and should be read: Wardān, the Warduniyā in Jewish sources, today also called Wardān, or Wardīn. A fragment of a *ketubbā* from (about) the beginning of the ninth century, contains the detail about the place where it was drawn up: "in Wardūniya of Baghdad, located on the Tigris River"; as can be understood from the above, the Karkh was next to the village of Wardūniya (in the Arabic sources, it is usually Wardān), an area where there was a local court, that certainly convened in the synagogue of that Wardūniya. The quarter that was built above the ruins of Wardūniya, north of the Karkh, was called al-Ḥarbiyya. We have seen that the al-Ḥarrānī street, and the arch called by that name, connected the Karkh and the Ḥarbiyya. According to Jāḥiẓ, the residents of the Ḥarbiyya were well-known for their sharpness in casuistry and intrigues. The quarter was named for Ḥarb b. ʿAbdallāh al-Balkhī al-Rāwandī, one of the commanders of the army at the time of al-Manṣūr, who was in charge of the Baghdad *shurṭa* (police). As I have mentioned (above, sec. 166), it was a center of Ḥanbalī fanatics. Ibn al-Jawzī mentions the mosque in al-Ḥarbiyya, built in the days of al-Muṭṭiʿ, i.e., at about the middle of the tenth century. As stated, the Wardūniya and Ḥarbiyya area was north of the Karkh.

We also encounter in Baghdad the Jews' Street, *darb al-yahūd*. It was said of this street that it led to *qaṣr* at ʿisā b. ʿalī al-ḥāshimī (al-Manṣūr's uncle) i.e., to the area of the land parceled to him and where his palace was located. As we saw in the preceding section, also living there was Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUbaydallāh b. Yaḥyā; Yaḥyā was a Jewish merchant who was also a teacher; whereas the son and the grandson converted to Islam.

The financier, Sahl b. Neṭīra (below, sec. 365) lived in *darb Jamīl*, in the *qaṣr* at al-rabiʿ; it should be assumed that this was the quarter where the wealthy and the distinguished Baghdadis lived, and perhaps some of the great Jewish merchants and financiers also lived there. The ancient sections of Baghdad were named for al-Manṣūr's assistants and courtiers after the city's founding. *Darb jamīl* was named for Jamīl b. Muḥammad, a government official, while *qaṣīyat al-rabiʿ*, was named for al-Rabiʿ b. Yūnus, the vizier, who received it from Caliph al-Manṣūr, apparently in order to collect taxes and gather an income from the area, as we learn from the term, *qaṣīʿa*. Before the city was founded, there was a village there called Ban'ūriyā, that belonged to the Bādūriyā district. *Darb Jamīl*, where the Neṭīrā family lived, was in the fore part of the al-Rabiʿ quarter. It may be that the heads of the yeshiva in Baghdad for many generations enjoyed

privileged residences and had property near the city, as testified, towards the end of the twelfth century, by Petahiah of Regensburg: "and he crossed over the Tigris where the water flows downstream in 15 days (from Nineveh) until the garden of the head of the yeshiva of Babylon (=Baghdad), even though walking would have taken a month.... and arrived at a garden of the head of the yeshiva, and in the garden were all kinds of fruit, and the garden is very big, with mandrakes which have the face of a man and their herbs are broad, and from there he walked in one day to Baghdad of Babylonia".²⁸⁴

(285) The most important canal that passed in the vicinity of Baghdad was NAHR ʿĪSĀ, which began near Nehardeʿā, al-Anbār, and connected the Euphrates and the Tigris. This was an ancient canal, retrenched by ʿĪsā Ibn Mūsā, al-Manṣūr's nephew, his brother's son, and named for him. Near the mouth of this canal the "round city" was built. It would not be far-fetched to assume that Nahr ʿĪsā served the Jews of Baghdad and environs as an artery of permanent and convenient transportation with the area of the Euphrates, for Pumbedita was undoubtedly situated near where the canal connected with the Euphrates. Nahr ʿĪsā split in the area of the village of al-Muḥawwal, about six kilometers before the "round city", and its northern branch was the Ṣarāh canal, that I mentioned above, that cut through the Karkh before reaching the Tigris. Opposite the Ṣarāh, to the southeast, on the other side of the Tigris, was the locality of KALWĀDHĀ, that also gave its name to the surrounding district. This area was built on the Nahr Bīn mouth, a branch of the main eastern canal, the Nahrwān canal, i.e., at the connection of Nahr Bīn and the Tigris. At the time of Ibn Ḥawkal, in the second half of the tenth century, Kalwādhā was already a kind of southern quarter of Baghdad, because the distance of a parasang (approximately) between it and Baghdad became completely built up. Kalwādhā, and also

²⁸⁴ Shabīb: Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 901; *darb al-Zaʿfarānī*: al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *Ta'rikh*, VII, 407-410; Sibṭ, *Mir'āh* (MS Paris 1505), 192b; founding of the Karkh: Ibn Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 13; removal of bachelors: *Akhbār al-dawla al-ʿabbāsiyya* (MS Paris 4842), 129. Benjamin of Tudela (Adler), 42; Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 444; cf. Obermeyer, 151f.; Sarre u. Herzfeld, as in the previous note; Hamadānī, *Takmilā*, 189; al-Ḥarrānī: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 489f.; see details on Tāq al-ḥarrānī, Bāb al-shaʿr, Sūq Baghdād, in Lassner, *Topogr.*, 258 n. 56, 292 n. 31; Wardūniya: Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 461-464, with references to the Babylonian Talmud; the localization proposed there is naturally invalid, if we follow the Geniza letter TS Ar. 38.11, see in Hopkins, *Goitein Pres. Vol.* (English part), 94ff., and see the discussion in *JNES*, 43(1984), 151ff.; Hopkins read *bi-wardūniya ha-ʿir*, whereas Golb has shown that it says there: *bi-wardūniya de-baghdād*. See the matters of Wardūniya, Qaṭʿat al-Rabīʿ, Bāb al-Karkh, in Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 279f. The location of al-Ḥarbiyya, see Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 126. See Jāhiz, *Ḥayawān*, III, 20; see *ibid.* n. 7 of the editor about al-Ḥarbiyya. See Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 234f., who *inter alia* mentions a man from this quarter, Ibrāhīm b. Ishāq al-Ḥarbī, one of the righteous, expert in grammar and other matters of language and law, who died in Dhū'l-ḥijja 285, January 899. See also Iṣṭakhri, 83; Ibn Ḥawqal, 641; cf. Goldziher, *ZDMG*, 62 (1908), 148f.; *Darb al-yahūd*: al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *Ta'rikh*, X, 39; ʿAbdallāh was a contemporary of al-Khaṭīb, who writes that he intended to visit him, but he gave it up since it was a very hot day. He died at the age of 87, on Saturday, 14 Rajab 408 (6 Dec. 1017); see also Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 1045. The residence of Sahl b. Neṣīrā: II, c, a, line 19. See on *Darb Jamīl* and *Qaṭʿat al-Rabīʿ*: al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *ibid.*, I, 88f.; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 119; Sibṭ, *Mir'āh* (MS Paris 1505), 125a; cf. Lassner, *Topogr.*, 72f., 257. See the description of the plan of Baghdad and its outstanding buildings in the early Middle Ages, in: Massignon, *La passion*, I, 272-277. See Petahiah, 7; cf. Le Strange, *Lands*, 30f., 67.

the villages upon which Baghdad was built, that I mentioned above, were included, I believe, in the area of Jūkhā, or Rādhān—this subject will be raised in the discussion on the Rādhānite merchants (below, secs. 352-354). Sherira Gaon says about the gaon of Pumbedita, Isaiah ha-Levi b. Abbā (796-798) that “he was from Kalwādhā, a town that is close to Baghdad”; i.e., Sherira, in 987, still does not consider Kalwādhā to be part of Baghdad. In 900, Kalwādhā served as the base of the Isma‘īli rebels led by Ḥamdān Qarmāt.

South of Baghdad, at a distance of about 40 kilometers, was the city that had once been the capital of the Persian empire, called by the Arabs, AL-MADĀ’IN, which means ‘the cities’. Its two main components in Persian times, were Ctesiphon, on the Tigris eastern bank, and Seleucia, on the western. Actually, the city was a complex of seven cities. In Jewish sources it is called Māhōzē, as it should be pronounced, which is the plural; it is an Aramaic name, meaning: cities, or port cities (on the Tigris). The Arabic sources preserved the names of the seven cities. According to Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, they were built by Khusraw Anūshīrwān; one of them was called *Bih az andīr*, which Ḥamza interprets: better than Antioch; it appears that this was Seleucia; there was Ṭisfūn, apparently a corruption of the original name, Ctesiphon. The earliest Arab settlers in Iraq, right after the conquest, settled in Madā’in, but did not like the place because (as it seems) it was polluted and dilapidated, and Caliph ‘Umar transferred them to the new city that was then established, Kūfa. Māhōzē, as is well known, was an important center of Babylonian Jews in the Persian period, as shown by many talmudic sources. There was a tradition that identified it (more accurately: the Ctesiphon part) with the biblical Resen (Genesis 10:12): “Resen is Iqtesifōn, the great city” (BT *Yōmā* 10a); translated by Saadia Gaon as: Madā’in; “Rāvā was from Māhōzē, which is Resen, which has been the royal capital”. Benjamin of Tudela found “about 5,000 Jews there; in the midst there is the great synagogue of Rāvā, who is buried next to the synagogue, and beneath the grave is a burial catacomb where 12 of his students are buried”. Benjamin also refers to it as: Gazīgān, a name for which no interpretation, to the best of my knowledge, has been found.

Evidence of the existence of a Jewish community in Madā’in is also in the information regarding a great controversy that broke out between Muslims and Jews in 1178 (above, sec. 249).

HÜMINIYĀ, known from the Babylonian Talmud (*Qiddūshin* 72a; *Yevāmōt*, 16b) still existed in the period under discussion, as we see in a fragment of a lexicon from the Geniza: “Hūminiya, a town known to this day (which is) until(!) the shore of the Tigris below Baghdad about a day’s walk”, i.e., it was located to the south of Madā’in.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ Nahr ‘Isā, see Le Strange, *Lands*, 30; Lassner, *Topogr.*, 276f.; Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 412; Kalwādhā, see Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 50f., 175, 295; Sherira, *Letter*, 109; Ivanow, *Ism. Trad.*, 48; Madā’in: Ḥamza, 29, 31, 46, 57; the transfer of the tribes: Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh*, I, 2414; see the list of the seven cities also in Qazwīnī, *Athār*, 303, who mentions, in the second half of the thirteenth century AD, the ruins of the white palace built there by Khusraw Anūshīrwān, seen by Qazwīnī himself; see *ibid.* also on the siege of Antioch by Khusraw Anūshīrwān; Ṭabarī, *Ta’rikh*, I, 2441, mentions the white palace, which is *īwān kisrā*, as it was at the time of the conquest, full of statues and pictures, and insists that the Muslims did not touch them, although they converted the palace into a mosque. See also: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 446f., who endeavors to clarify the right pronunciation, in Persian, of the

(286) In describing the end of the controversy over the exilarchate, when it was agreed to hand over the post to David b. Zakkai (above, sec. 139), Nathan the Babylonian tells how the people of the Pumbedita yeshiva left Baghdad to meet David b. Zakkai, "to a place called ŠARŠAR, a walk of half a day from Babylon" (i.e., Baghdad). This may have been the Šīšūra in the Babylonian Talmud, *Qiddūshin* 72a, about which it was said that it belonged to the *tekhiltā* (border) of a district known as *ḥavil yāmā* (apparently: "the western region"). Muqaddasī says of Šaršar that it was similar to some of the villages in Palestine; there was a canal on its side (the continuation is corrupted). The town was located on the Šaršar canal, that was south of the ʿĪsā river, and also connected the Euphrates with the Tigris.

WĀSIṬ, the 'middle' city, was in the center of Iraq, at an equal distance from Kūfa and from Ahwāz. It was one of the cities the Arabs established after the conquest, on the order of al-Ḥajjāj, i.e., about AD 700. There was a legend that at the time of the flood a piece of land cut away from Palestine (*al-arḍ al-muqaddasa*, the Holy Land) and landed at the place where Wāsiṭ was built. The Jews of Wāsiṭ are mentioned in connection with the funeral procession of a local figure, Maṣūr b. Zādān, in 131, i.e., AD 748/9, when it was said that his cortege was also accompanied by the local Jews. Wāsiṭ was built on both banks of the Tigris. In the letters of the Baghdad yeshiva (above, sec. 267) it was called *tōkh* (or *tāwekh*), we do not know whether it was an appellation used daily, or a metaphor. The area of Wāsiṭ was one of the most fertile in Iraq, and would bring in much tax to the state treasury. The Sura yeshiva, in whose *rāshūt* Wāsiṭ was situated, would annually receive from Wāsiṭ and its environs 150 gold dinars, says Nathan the Babylonian. The yeshiva head, Daniel b. Eleazar, addresses his letter about the appointment of a beadle for the Ezra the Scribe synagogue, in 1201, to "the holy communities of Wāsiṭ and al-Bašra and all of their environs". The al-Barqūlī family, mentioned at the beginning of the thirteenth century (above, sec. 273), lived in Wāsiṭ. According to Benjamin of Tudela: "Wāsiṭ (as it should be read, and which was printed: Lalusim, see also other versions) where there are about 10,000 (2,000?) Jews, including a *rav* and a *dayyān*".

The most southerly part of Iraq, from Wāsiṭ southwards, was named MEYSHĀN, and is also known to us from talmudic sources; for the Persians, it was: Dast Maysān, for the Arabs: Maysān. A Pumbedita gaon at about 700 came from Meyshān, this was R. Ḥiyyā (above, sec. 178). The area

seven cities' names; cf. Le Strange, *Lands*, 33ff. See the sources on Māhōzē in antiquity, in Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 179ff. Resen, see Harkavy, *Resp.*, 214 (no. 404), cf. Rapoport, *Erekh m.*: 'Aqtesifōn; Benjamin of Tudela, 42 (and the *variae lectiones* of Gazīgān), Saadia's *Commentaries* (ed. Kafah), 23; Gazīgān of Benjamin is perhaps Darzījan, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 567: a large village on the western bank of the Tigris; Yāqūt, *ibid.*, IV, 446: one of Madā'in's seven cities; Muqaddasī, *Aḡālīm*, 53, 115: it belongs to Baghdad, or to Madā'in. Another possibility: close to Madā'in without being part of it, was the locality Zarīrān—a Persian name which has something to do with gold (*zar*). Ibn Jubayr, 215, found it to be, towards the end of the twelfth century, one of the most beautiful villages on earth; he mentions its orchards and admires its market. See also Yāqūt, *ibid.*, II, 929: seven parasangs (ca. 40 km.) from Baghdad. No doubt, one of these names was garbled in Benjamin; cf. also Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 48. Hūminiyā: DK 298j., cf. Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 152ff.; with references to Arab sources as well. See also: Le Strange, *Lands*, 37.

also included the marshes, the *baṭā'ih*, in the Arabic sources, created by the Tigris. The place thought to be the grave of Ezra, and the adjacent synagogue, were in the area of Meyshān. We have a copy of two writs of appointment, of a father and son, who were beadles of the synagogue, "of Ezra ha-Kohen the Scribe". The writ of appointment of the father, Abū'l-Ḥasan, only a fragment of which has remained, contains a promise that upon his death his son, Abū Maṣṣūr, would be appointed to the position, and like him, be "in the service of this holy site". Granting the appointment are the gaon, Samuel b. Eli, and David, the exilarch, the David who was a brother of Samuel (above, sec. 255). The time of the father's appointment was: Iyar, Sel. 1508, that began on 21 April 1197. Four years later, "Daniel, head of the yeshiva of the Diaspora son of R. Eleazar *he-ḥāsīd*, of blessed memory" (son of Hibat Allah), renewed the appointment on Iyar, Sel. 1512 that began on 7 April 1201 (his *alāma* was: "God is a refuge for us. Selah" [Psalms 62:8]). Abū Maṣṣūr "son of Master Abū'l-Ḥasan, the beadle of the synagogue of our Lord Ezra the Scribe, may he rest in peace" displays fear of Heaven and diligence "in the service of the holy site"; before this he wrote: "in the service of the synagogue of our Lord Ezra", but changed it, because he apparently wanted that Ezra's grave, which they believed was there, be also included in his charge. At about 1165, the convert Samawāl Ibn 'Abbās, writes in his treatise "Silencing the Jews" (above, sec. 271), about the Jews' claim that to this day light breaks out above the grave (of Ezra ha-Kohen), that is in the vicinity of al-Baṭā'ih (the area of the aforementioned marshes). About 50 years later al-Ḥarīzī also writes about the light: "between the lands of Chaldea and Shūshān the capital (i.e., in southeastern Iraq) there is a place called Samrā, and in the language of Kedar it is called Aḥwā, and at a distance of some three parasangs (about 18 kilometers) is where the grave of our Lord Ezra was once located", and in al-Ḥarīzī's own time, he says, was abandoned and desolate. The contemporary of Samawāl Ibn 'Abbās, Benjamin of Tudela, writes that Ezra's grave was on the Samra river, in the midst of a population of about 1,500 Jews: "and that is where the grave of Ezra ha-Kohen, who walked from there to King Artahshasta and died there and next to his grave is a great synagogue"; he also mentions a mosque built by the Muslims near the same place. According to Yāqūt, Ezra the Scribe's grave is located in a village in Maysān: "the grave of 'Uzayr, which is famous and built up, and the Jews take care of it, and for that purpose they have consecrated foundations and vows; and I saw it". Likewise, Qazwīnī, Yāqūt's contemporary, writes in a similar vein, about the *mashhad* of the prophet 'Uzayr. Petahiah of Regensburg also mentions "Ezra the Scribe, at the end of the land of Babylonia"; due to the "cloud of fire" you "cannot see the house built over it because of the radiance over it on the grave".²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶ Ṣarṣar: see Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 406ff., with a different interpretation of what is said in *Qiddūshin* and its parallels; Muqaddasī, *Aḡālīm*, 121; Ibn Jubayr, 215, admires its beauty; cf. Le Strange, *Lands*, 32. Wāsiṭ: see al-Razzāz, 43; a piece of Palestine's land: *ibid.*, 36; the funeral procession, *ibid.*, 90. See on Wāsiṭ also: Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ*, 599: between Wāsiṭ and Baṣra, Kūfa, Madā'in, there is a distance of 40 parasangs (some 240 km), which is very far from precise, the truth of the matter being that it is half the distance between Madā'in (and later: Baghdad) and Baṣra, when traveling on the Tigris. Nathan the Babylonian: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 86; Daniel b. Eleazar: 91; Benjamin of Tudela, 48; cf. Assaf,

(287) UBULLA, today a suburb of Bašra, was an ancient city; the Arabs conquered it in the year 12, AD 633, at the outset of their conquest of the areas of Babylonia. In the period of the geonim, it was called Huvlāt. At about 825, it is said in a responsum of the gaon, Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob (Sura, 820-830), that a sick person had to be transported from Huvlāt to Bašra to see a physician. According to Ṭabarī, Ubulla was an anchorage for ships arriving from China and other places. It is from there that the Rādhānite Jewish merchants set sail. According to Tanūkhī, the canal linking it with Bašra was an important sea passageway in the first half of the ninth century. Iṣṭakhrī relates that the canal's length was four parasangs, about 25 kilometers, and all along its banks were houses and gardens, "as if it were one garden". In 227, AD 842, the Zanjī rebels attacked Ubulla, put it to the torch, and killed more than 2,000 of its people. Ya'qūbī notes that the boats built in Ubulla, called *khayṭiyya*, were reputed to sail all the way to Sijlmāssa in the area of Sūs al-Aqṣā, and then to China.

BAŠRA was one of the main cities in the period under discussion. It was said that its name meant: black gravel. It is one of the cities founded by the Arabs after their conquest, having been established in the year 17, AD 638, and was first a kind of army base where the people of the fighting tribes and their families encamped, each tribe and each clan in its own space. The new city was built northwest of Ubulla, and, as has already been stated, a canal was dug, suitable for sailing, that linked the two. The land on which Bašra was built had previously belonged to the local people, the people of Meyshān, Jews, apparently, and they demanded from the Arabs that in lieu of the land taken from them they be exempted from the tax; then the Banū Shu'ayrā, also local people, whose livelihood was based on hair textile (or rope) weaving, attacked, cursed, beat them, and forced them to flee.

Above, I have already presented a number of issues regarding Bašra; we have seen that around 700, a Jew, Ḥumrān b. Abān, was governor of Bašra; we have seen the issue of the ancient coins minted by Jews in Bašra, inscribed with Hebrew inscriptions; also, the matter of the *qāḏī* of Bašra, ʿĪsā b. Abān, and the trial he conducted between Jews and Muslims; also, the matter of the public disputation between Jews and Muslims in the middle of the eighth century. At the time of the Zanjī revolt, in 842, when sacking Bašra, they caused great destruction, just as had happened in Ubulla. According to Dhahabī, 16,000 Bašrians then died, the survivors fled, and the city was left in ruins.

Bašra belonged to the Sura *rāshūt*, and, according to Nathan the Babylonian, Sura would receive "from Bašra and its environs, 300 *zehūvīm* (gold dinars) per year". It appears that transportation to Bašra was conven-

Tarbīz, 1(1.1929/30), 122; Le Strange, *Lands*, 39f.; Meyshān: see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 714; see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 43; what I wrote in *Fleischer Jub. Vol.*, 11, that the exilarch mentioned there is Samuel's son, should be corrected; he was probably Samuel's brother (the two Mosul brothers). Samawāl Ibn ʿAbbās, 50f.; al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemōnī*, 287ff.; Benjamin of Tudela, 48f.; Yāqūt, *ibid.* (above in this note); Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 464. Petahiah, 20, 27f.; cf. Obermeyer, 323f.; the Samra river: Yāqūt, *ibid.*, 840, under Nahr Samura: "it is a village in Meyshān; people call it: Nahr Simarra"; cf. also Ben-Jacob, *Qevārīm*, 138f.; see also in Yāqūt, 257, s.v. al-Ḥazzāmūn: a quarter in the eastern part of Wāsiṭ, where there is a tomb, about which one argues that it is "the tomb of Ezrā b. Hārūn b. ʿImrān, and it is visited by Muslims and Jews". Perhaps that same place in the Baḡāʾih is meant, and one should remember that the topographical details in these sources are sometimes far from being exact.

ient, proceeding along canals; the gaon, Joseph b. Jacob, Saadia Gaon's rival, moved to Baṣra after the latter's death. There is no doubt that Baṣra was an important center of Jewish scholars, and we have seen (above, sec. 72) the information about the early period of Abbasid rule, regarding the councils of scholars of different religions that used to convene in Baṣra with the participation of the poet, son of the exilarch; it is known that Baṣra was also a Muslim spiritual center, and that the great writer, al-Jāhiz, was a resident of the city.

Towards the end of the tenth century, Muqaddasī found Baṣra to be a pretty city, with an advantage over Baghdad because of its good people. He described the city's three markets; about 60 years later, the Persian traveler, Nāṣir Khusraw, mentions the markets, where, according to him, there was a division of labor: in the morning, the market where camel meat was sold was active, another market at noon, and, in the evening, there was the cup market; what was special about these markets, is that the sellers did not use money; rather, the buyer would deposit money with the *ṣarrāf*, the money-changer, and receive a document (i.e., a check; *khaṭṭ ṣarrāf*), then when making the purchase, there would be a *hawāla*, that is, the check would be endorsed to the seller's credit. According to what we know about the Jews' part in the economy of the Muslim countries in that period, there is no doubt that the Jews were highly involved in this activity.

The major part of the responsa of the Babylonian geonim was preserved outside of Babylonia, but we have information about queries sent from Baṣra to Sura, in the ninth century: "the people of Baṣra asked our Lord Naḥshōn Gaon" (872-879), and in the eleventh century, they addressed queries to the Pumbedita yeshiva. In a list of treatises, the following text was preserved: "the twelfth quire, queries sent to our Master Hayy that arrived from Baṣra (the beginning of the first question:) students sat in the home of the head of the Sura yeshiva and studied with him, 'he who sold the house did not sell it' (Bāwā Batrā, ch. iv)"; from here Eppenstein derived that the Sura yeshiva moved to Baṣra; while Mann saw the plain meaning: those students from Baṣra wanted to know Hayy Gaon's view about what they had learned in Sura; also mentioned are queries that arrived at Hayy Gaon's from Baṣra. A query has been preserved regarding checks (*ṣafātij*) sent from Baṣra to Baghdad, and referred to "our Lord gaon and to the chief judge", i.e., to Sherira and Hayy.

In the second half of the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela notes that there were "about 10,000 Jews in Baṣra, including scholars and many wealthy people". Attesting to the large Jewish population of Baṣra and its environs, is the information that one of its important canals was called *nahr al-yahūd*.

Near Baṣra, or one of its suburbs, was SHABHĀ, the residence of Rav Aḥa, author of the *she'iltōt*; it is mentioned by Yāqūt; its name in Arabic: Sabkha, meaning salty land, about which he says is "a place in Baṣra".²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ The conquest of Uballa: Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 340; Huvlāt, see Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 212 (from: TS G 1, no. 86); *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Ketubbōt*, 224 (no. 563); see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2384; Ya'qūbī, *Buldān*, 360; Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, I, 215; Iṣṭakhrī, 81: the canal between Uballa and Baṣra was four parasangs (ca. 25km.) long; the Zanjīs: Dhahabī, *al-ʿAyn*, 82a; see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 96-98, with comments on the name Uballa (however, it seems that the original name was Huvlāt; its root is *wbl* and it seems that its primary meaning had to do with cattle).

(288) We find Isaac ha-Kohen b. al-Awānī, who served as gaon between 1210-1220, among the later Baghdad geonim. According to Yāqūt, AWĀNA was a town filled with gardens and orchards, about 10 parasangs (about 60 kilometers) north of Baghdad, to the east of the Tigris, near ʿUkbarā. Šafadī mentions the famous *kātib*, Abū'l-Faḍl Saʿīd b. Yūsuf b. al-Ḥasan b. Samra, *al-kātib al-awānī*; he was a Jew who converted to Islam and wrote *qaṣīdas* (a kind of poems) against Jews and Christians. Al-Ḥarīzī writes that, in Mosul, he met “a man from Awāna-Baghdad”, which shows that this is how the locality was called; that person, Abū ʿAlī Ibn Bazzār (grains seller), conspired against al-Ḥarīzī, and the poet had some sharp remarks to say about him in a *maqāma*.

Awāna's twin, to the south, was the small town of ʿUKBARĀ, at a distance of seven parasangs (about 42 kilometers) from Baghdad, also on the eastern bank of the Tigris. If we relate to the literal meaning of a geonic responsum (Hayy Gaon?), Jews who had emigrated from Egypt lived there (above, sec. 281). In the first half of the ninth century, we find a ʿUkbarā man, Ismaʿīl al-ʿUkbarī (above, sec. 153), who was the leader of a sect. Benjamin of Tudela informs us that the city was built by Jeconiah (Jehoiachin), king of Judah, and, according to him, it had about 10,000 Jews; he lists the heads of the community, Ḥanan, Yavin, Ishmael. Near ʿUkbarā was a village by the name of GHUMMĀ, mentioned in the Arab poetry are its Jews and their good wine.

In one of the letters of the gaon Samuel b. Eli, of 1191, the AL-BĀB community is mentioned. Indeed, a locality by the name of al-Bāb in Iraq, is known, it is Bāb Šulā, or Bāb Šalwā, or Bāšalwā. However, one should note that the letter was sent to the communities near the *Jazīra* (northern Iraq) and to Syria, thus the intention is to the al-Bāb, known by the name of Bāb Buzāʿa, in the area of Ḥalab, near Manbij.

We have seen (above, sec. 189), that the Pumbedita gaon Menashe b. Joseph (788-796) was a *gūkhā ʿā*, i.e., hailing from Jūkhā, the country of the Rādhānites, “from the people of BĒ ʿUQBĀ”; Bē ʿUqbā is Baʿqūbā, also written: Bāʿqūbā. According to Yāqūt, it was a large village, like a city, 10 parasangs (about 60 kilometers) from Baghdad, on the Khurāsān road, i.e., north of Baghdad, east of the Tigris. West of it was the Diyālā canal, and

See Minorski (Qazwīnī), 138 with some details on the textiles, the scarves and turbans produced there, that were called *bullī*; Himyarī, *Rawḍ*, 8, deals with the digging of the channel, whose expenses were shared, half and half, by the treasury of the Muslims and the *ahl al-kharāj*, the tax payers, i.e. Jews and Christians. See on Bašra: Le Strange, *Lands*, 44f.; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 470; Obermeyer, 267; the demand of an exemption from tax, or its reduction, see: Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IV, 171; Ibn Saʿd, *Ṭabaqāt*, VII(2), 10. The sack of Bašra by the Zanjis: Dhahabī, *ibid.* (above in this note). Bašra under the authority of Sura: Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 86; Sherira, *Letter*, 118. Ibn Daʿūd, *Book of Trad.*, 42: “until Rav Joseph fled to the city of Bašra”. The city's advantages, the markets: Muqaddasī, *Aḡālīm*, 117f.; Nāšir Khusraw, 85f.; the quire of responsa: Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 71, and see Eppenstein, *Beitr.*, 159; Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 170f. n. 74. See also Harkavy, *Resp.*, 104 (no. 221): “these are some of the queries arriving from Bašra”; in continuation there is mention of the topic from *Bāvā batrā* ch. iv (“whoever sold the house did not sell its extension”, etc.), see *ibid.*, 214 (in the responsum no. 422) the explanation of the word *tefiah*, answering a query that arrived from Bašra; the matter of ‘the checks’, see *ibid.*, 269f. (no. 548); see Benjamin of Tudela, 48; *nahr al-yahūd*: Ibn Serapion, 29. See also: Massignon, *Tschudi Pres. Vol.*, 163; Obermeyer, 338f.; Shabbā: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 30; cf. Obermeyer, 339.

the Jalūla canal cut through the village. Yāqūt has praise for its gardens and orchards, and notes that there were markets and mosques.²⁸⁸

(289) Nathan the Babylonian mentions Nahrwān, among the localities in the exilarch's *rāshūt* (authority); "NAHRWĀN and all its suburbs are far from Babylon (=Baghdad) about half a day eastwards, and he (the exilarch) appoints its *dayyān*, with the approval of the heads of the yeshivot.... and he had an income from it of about 60 or 70 gold coins" (i.e., 60-70 dinars a year). I mentioned (above, secs. 139, 144) a Nahrwān personality, Nīsī the Nahrwānī, a contemporary of Saadia Gaon. As the name of the locality (Nahrwān=the Wān canal) shows, it was situated on a canal of the same name, that ran east of the Tigris, on a parallel course, and was one of the greatest and most important of Babylonian canals. The locality is sometimes called "*Jisr* (bridge of) Nahrwān".

Two central towns in the Jewish Diaspora in the talmudic period were PUMBEDITA and NEHARDE^a. Neharde^a preceded Pumbedita, and the yeshiva was located there until the city was destroyed by the Palmyrenes in AD 259, according to what we know from Sherira Gaon: "in the year (Sel.) 570 Pāpā b. Neşer came and destroyed Neharde^a"; its place was taken by Pumbedita. Today it is clear that these two localities were on the Euphrates, on its eastern side. In the sources of the period under discussion, the names, Neharde^a, Pumbedita, Fīrūz Shābūr, al-Anbār, and Fallūja, are interchangeable. In one instance we see ^aAmram Gaon apparently identifying Pumbedita and Neharde^a, when he mentions "Neharde^a (instead of Pumbedita) and Sura". However, it is easy to interpret this appellation as referring to the ancient times when there was still a yeshiva in Neharde^a. We have a fragment of a responsum of an anonymous gaon regarding the laws of *niddā*: "...in all these matters the scholars acted this way when they still were in Neharde^a and its environs and Pumbedita; now, however, when we are established in Baghdad, the great city..."; this confirms what derives from the logic of Sherira Gaon's *Letter*, that the scholars of Neharde^a moved (among other places) to Pumbedita.

In the geonic period Neharde^a still had a unique status, especially its synagogue, *shaf yetīv*. The Babylonian exiles, led by "Jeconiah king of Judah and his party", built there "a synagogue in which they included stones and earth brought with them from the Temple, saying about it (Psalms 102:14): 'For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour

²⁸⁸ Awāna, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 395f., who mentions Muslim scholars who belonged there, contemporaries of the gaon Isaac ha-Kohen. Al-Ḥarīzī: see Stern, *Sefunot*, 8 (1963/4), 149; Abū ^aAlī was from "Awāna Baghdad". See Safādī, *Wafayāt*, I, 274; al-Ḥarīzī in Mosul, see Stern, *ibid.*, 155. ^aUkbarā: Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ*, 412. Immigrants from Egypt: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 141 (no. 285), and see Yāqūt, *ibid.*, III, 705, who informs that ^aUkbarā is the Aramaic name of the locality, whereas its original Persian name was Buzurg Shāpūr, which became garbled. See Benjamin of Tudela, 35, cf. Borchardt, *JJLG*, 16 (1924), 141; Le Strange, *Lands*, 50; Adams, *Land*, 90; Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 53. See on ^aUkbarā in the talmudic period: Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 452-455; Ghummā: Ghunayma, 135f., cf. Yāqūt, *ibid.*, III, 809; al-Bāb: see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 59; see Samuel b. Eli's letter, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2.1929/30), 63, and see al-Bāb in Yāqūt, *ibid.*, I, 437; see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 107, about the controversy over whether the Manbij area belongs to the Iraqi Jazīra or to Syria. Judging by that letter of Samuel b. Eli, it seems that he ascribed this locality and its neighborhood to Syria; however, Raqqa used to be considered part of Iraq, see below. Ba^aqūbā: Yāqūt, *ibid.*, I, 672, and it is also mentioned by Muqaddasī, *Aqālim*, 115: Bāqaba (see *ibid.*, the editor's note); cf. Sarre u. Herzfeld, II, 191, and see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 59.

the dust thereof, and called that synagogue *shaf yetiv*, i.e., that the Lord departed from the Holy Place, and settled here"; a tradition similar to this one is presented in the name of Rabbēnū Nissīm, who received it from Hayy Gaon; from the time of the Talmud, the tradition of the place's sanctity continued, as it was said of it "...the *shekhinā* was exiled along with them.... Abayē said: it meant the synagogue of Hūšil (that is no longer mentioned in the period of the geonim) and the synagogue of *shāf we-yetiv* in Neharde^a" (BT, *Megillā* 29a). Benjamin of Tudela arrives (if he indeed did arrive) at Shafyetiv from Sura, and he notes: "and there is the synagogue built by the Jews from earth of Jerusalem and its stones, and they built it and called it Shafyetiv which is in Neharde^a". Petahiah of Regensburg relates that thanks to "the seal" (permission) of the head of the yeshiva (Samuel b. Eli) they showed him "the synagogue of *Shav(!) we-yetiv* and its three walls of stones and its western wall on the Euphrates river and the entire wall does not have a single stone or brick, except for the earth brought by Jeconiah, and that synagogue has no roof, for all of it is in ruins". He says of Neharde^a, that "it is all in ruins", but "there is a community at the edge of the city", i.e., Jews still lived in a place near Neharde^a.

There is great confusion in what Benjamin of Tudela tells. He arrives (by river?) from Qarqisiyya on the Euphrates, after a trip of two days, "to al-Anbār (as it should be read) which is Pumbedita which is in Neharde^a", finding there 3,000 Jews, of whom he mentions, Hēn, Moses and Yehoyaqim, who were scholars, also finding there the graves and synagogues of Rav Judah, of Samuel, of the exilarch Bustanai, of R. Nathan and of R. Nahmān b. Pāpā; elsewhere he says that he arrived from Sura to Shafyetiv in Neharde^a, a day-and-a-half distance from "al-Anbār (as it should be read), which is Pumbedita which is in Neharde^a" (now he finds there the graves and the synagogue of Rav and of Samuel, and those 3,000 Jews). From this we see that Pumbedita was also called al-Anbār, and that it was in Neharde^a; thus, apparently, as Grätz has already shown, Neharde^a was not only the name of a locality, but also that of a district. It is easy to see that the name Neharde^a was originally that of a canal, Nahr De^a, and Pumbedita was—in the tradition of the period—in al-Anbār; one even used the name al-Anbār to designate Pumbedita, thus, reasonably, the name al-Anbār (=granaries) is the Arabic name of Neharde^a—the town and the district.

Qirqisānī, at the beginning of the tenth century, refers to the people of Pumbedita as *al-anbāriyīn*. Just after him, Sahl b. Maṣliah writes of the geonim: "who ruled over the Jews in Sura and Anbār". Saadia Gaon accuses Khalaf b. Sarjāda that he takes from al-Anbār as *rāshūt* money some 80 dinars (above, sec. 144; i.e., monies coming to Pumbedita from its subordinate communities; even though the Pumbedita yeshiva was then, apparently, in Baghdad, in daily parlance it was still called al-Anbār). Nathan the Babylonian writes: "Pumbedita, which is al-Anbār". In a list of books from the Geniza a book is listed, "the book about the controversies between Sura and al-Anbār". Al-Anbār was not the original name of the area of Neharde^a—it was preceded, naturally, by the name of the district (and the town) in Persian times: Fīrūz Shābūr, the names of two Persian Sasanid kings, which is the Greek Perisabor. The founder of the city was

King Shābūr, i.e., Shāhpūr, and, according to al-Mustawfī, Nebuchadnezzar was the one who brought the Jerusalem captives there; the name, 'grana-ries', was, of course, explained as: where the kings stored the grain. Sherira Gaon mentions Fīrūz Shābūr: Marī b. Dīmī (an ancestor of Sherira's) was the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva at about AD 600. "His school is known in Fīrūz Shābūr until this day as the school of Rav Marī". 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib was received by "our Lord and Master Isaac, who resided in Fīrūz Shābūr at the time it was conquered by 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib" etc. This is a genuine example of the use of the name Fīrūz Shābūr as indicating Pumbedita, exactly as they used the name al-Anbār. Hayy b. David, as well, in writing for the Pumbedita yeshiva, at about 850 (above, secs. 201, 205), says: "at our yeshiva in Fīrūshābūr". Hayy Gaon also uses the name Fīrūz Shābūr instead of Neharde'a, when mentioning burial in a sanctified place (above, sec. 58). A Ramla man, who for many years has stayed in Baghdad, notes in a letter of about 1095, that he often visited the graves of the righteous, and the synagogues named for them, including scholars of the Talmud and heads of yeshivot buried "in al-Anbār *fi'l-tūr*" (on the mountain), and mentions the graves of the geonim Saadia, Hayy, Samuel b. Hophni, and Israel b. Samuel; also of Hezekiah the exilarch and his father David, the *nāsī*; of the exilarch Daniel, who lived in the days of al-Ma'mūn (above, secs. 79-81); and of (Khalaf) b. Sarjāda. It appears that it is this burial place, situated not far from Pumbedita, somewhere in the district of Neharde'a, i.e., Fīrūz Shābūr, i.e., al-Anbār, that Hayy mentions in his responsum.

The exact location of Pumbedita is not known. The name, Pum Bedītā, means 'the mouth' of Bedītā, i.e., the place where the canal named Bedītā, meets with the Euphrates, where the locality by this name is situated. This is said in a fragment of an anonymous Talmud commentary: "Bedītā is a river, and its mouth is called Pum Bedītā". In the Arabic sources it is Bidāh; Actually the continuation of the fragment says: "and Bela' Yishma' is now called al-Bidāh"; here, *bela'* means canal, evidently, the ancient name of the canal was *yishma'*, however, I was unable to find this name anywhere else. According to Ibn Serapion, the Bidāh canal started at the Euphrates and passed through the district of Kūfa, thus it would have to be very far from al-Anbār, perhaps a distance of a 150 kilometer sail on the Euphrates, and joined with the lower Sura canal, south of Kūfa. Elsewhere, Ibn Serapion says that the Narash canal also poured into the Bidāh, in the district of Kūfa, east of the Euphrates. There were also attempts to identify Pumbedita with Fallūja—a town in the place where the Euphrates splits; but this has no solid foundation. In summary, at this time we have no real grasp for a solid assumption about Pumbedita's location. Obermeyer, who claimed that there was an identity, or a proximity, between Fallūja and Pumbedita, presented a grave inscription, of 'Izz al-Nisā daughter of Israel b. Yefet b. Samuel, who died in Sel. 1508, 1197; and of Sitt al-Ḥukamā' daughter of Sar Shālōm Asyā (=physician), who died in Sel. 1512, AD 1201, and assumed that it was from the Pumbedita cemetery. A *gēṭ* from

Pumbedita, as it were, a photocopy of which was published by David Lieber, is nothing but a forgery, as can be seen from the handwriting.²⁸⁹

(290) There was a Jewish community in AL-NIL. The gaon Daniel b. Eleazar writes to them in Tishri, Sel. 1520, September-October 1208: "to.... the holy and beloved community which resides in al-Nīl, the important elders, generous elderly, hearty youngsters, pleasant teachers.... and the rest of the congregation who illuminate their surroundings with their light, and whose enemy is frightened" etc. We do not know which enemy the gaon meant. It was a district capital, founded by al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, and was situated on a canal of the same name. It was right in the center of Iraq, northeast of Ḥilla, and half way between the Euphrates and the Tigris.

On the east flank of the Euphrates, on its eastern side, approximately opposite Ḥilla, was the city of BABYLON, which in this period was mainly ancient ruins, but apparently still populated. Benjamin of Tudela describes ancient Babylon and its ruins "at a distance of 30 miles". One mile from Nebuchadnezzar's palace "are 3,000 Jews who pray in the 'illit (the chamber of) Daniel" (Daniel 6:10). Petahiah of Regensburg also finds Nebuchadnezzar's house in "ancient Babylon", and adjacent to it "Daniel's house as new". And also mentions the 'illit, where Daniel prayed. Both Nebuchadnezzar's palace and Daniel's synagogue are mentioned in the Talmudim. Petahiah of Regensburg also mentions the "den of lions" (Dan. 6:10) and the "furnace of fire" (Dan. 3:19-27) in Daniel's 'illit; "and the

²⁸⁹ Nahrwān: Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 85; the Nahrwān: *ibid.*, 79f.; see the survey of what is mentioned by the Arab geographers of the ninth and the tenth centuries: Le Strange, *Lands*, 61; the destruction of Neharde'a: Sherira, *Letter*, 82, and see a short comment on this topic: Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 290, with more references. Amram Gaon: Ibn Ghayyāth, *Shā'arē s.*, I, 63; cf. Derenbourg, *Zeitschr. f. jüd. Theol.*, 5 (1844), 298. The distance between Pumbedita and Neharde'a: Assaf, *Taq. ha-g.*, 11. The anonymous gaon: TS Misc 36, fol. x. *Shāf yetiv*, Sherira, *Letter*, 72f.; see what was said in the name of Hayy Gaon, in Lewin in the additions to Sherira's Letter, xi (no. 14), and also: Rashi to Ps. 102:15; cf. Fischel, *Starr Mem. Vol.*, 113, who finds a similar theme in 2 Ki 18:32: "Until I come and take you away to a land like our own land" etc. Benjamin of Tudela, 46. Below, dealing with Isfahān, we shall find a similar tradition, on the earth of Palestine in the exile. Very interestingly, Fischel, *Tarbiz*, 6 (1934/5), 524-526, has pointed out that there is a parallel to *shāf yetiv* in Ibn al-Faḥīh, 261f., saying that the exiles (who arrived in Isfahān) called the placed *banīḥnā*, meaning in Hebrew (probably: *pō naḥanē*): "Halt! You arrived at this spot" (Fischel has a different interpretation); this is also cited by Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 1045, where the 'Hebrew' expression is garbled. Below we shall come across similar traditions relating to other localities. See Petahiah, 17. Benjamin of Tudela on Pumbedita, etc., 34, 46; see Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 444, n. 1; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 436, and see Qirḡisānī, *Anwār*, 140; Sahl b. Maṣliah: Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 42; Saadia Gaon, in *Sefer ha-galuy*, in: Stern, *Melilah*, 5 (1954/5), 133. Nathan the Babylonian: see 12, I, line 4. The list of books: TS 10 K 20, f. 9, cf. Lewin, *Metivōt*, in the introduction, II; Mann, *Texts*, I, 652. Firūz Shābūr, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 317f.; he tells us that the ancient name of al-Anbār had been *أبراء*, which most probably was originally *نهر دبا* and was garbled by copyists. Mawṣilī, *Wasā'il*, 158. See also Ibn Serapion, 14; Firūz Shābūr, also: Sherira, *Letter*, 100, 101; cf. 'al-Anbār' (by Streck and Duri) in *ET*. Hayy b. David: 4, b, line 12. The letter of the Ramla man: 86, a, lines 8-12. The fragment of the Talmud commentary: DK 298j; see the map in Le Strange, *Lands*, facing p. 25. See Burāqī, 141: the Bidāh is a *tassūj* (a small district), part of the Sawād (county, province) of Kūfa. See also: De Goejc, *ZDMG*, 39 (1885), 10; cf. also Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.* 362-364, with more references. See Obermeyer, 224f.; see the photocopy, in the article "Divorce" in *ET*, VI, 124; the forged *gēf* is supposed to be Karaite, of AD 749; cf. Friedman, *Marriage*, I, 115.

furnace of fire is half filled with water and whoever has a fever washes and dips in it and is cured". Mas^cūdī, at the beginning of the tenth century, also knows of the den, *jubb dāniyāl*. According to him, Christians and Jews go there on their holidays. Qazwīnī adds that most people believe that it is the cave of the two demons, Hārūt and Mārūt. That is where the terrible event happened to Mujāhid, when he did not heed the counsel of the exilarch, and entered the cave and mentioned Allah's name, and barely managed to escape these two demons (above, sec. 72).

SURA, the other center—along with Pumbedita—of Babylonian Jewry and the diasporas all over, was apparently situated in the vicinity of Nahr al-Malik ("the king's canal")—the canal and the town—apparently more southerly, perhaps southeast of this town—i.e., about 60 kilometers south of Baghdad. Support for this assumption is in a Syriac source, which writes about "a town which is there, completely (inhabited) by Jews; it is situated between Māhōzē and Hīra, and its name is Matāmasiyya", meaning, of course, Mātā Maḥsiya, which is Sura, situated between Māhōzē, i.e., Madā'in, and Hīra, which the Jews called—as it would seem—*Hiretā de-argiz*, about which it is said in a responsum of Naṭrūnai Gaon, that it was "near our city (i.e., Sura) at a distance of one parasang" (about six kilometers); "Argiz was a Zoroastrian; Rav Himnūnā resided there and there is still his grave there" (beginning of the fourth century). In the story of Sinān the physician, Sura is mentioned together with Nahr al-Malik (above, sec. 171). This entire area of southern Iraq, where Sura was situated, had, apparently, many Jews, and one may assume that they constituted the majority of the population. We have seen that it says in the aforementioned Syriac chronicle that all of Sura's inhabitants were Jews. Shortly after the Arab conquest, the process of Bedouin settlement in this area began, and there is evidence that at the time of ʿAlī, i.e., towards the end of the 650s, Qays b. Marwān of the Banū Juʿf (a clan from northern Yemen), settled in Sura, and it may be assumed that he was the leader of a large part of this clan. About 100 years afterwards, one of the greatest of Arab poets, Abū Nuwās, sang about the wine preferred by the Babylonian merchants, the old wine that the Jews of Sura let mature for many years. A strange tradition about the Sura Jews, is presented by Ibn Qutayba, in the name of al-Aṣmaʿī, that the Jews do not eat the vegetables of Sura, because they are from the time of the flood; this sounds like some kind of joke.

In those days there was still a synagogue in Sura that was built by Rav; according to Sherira Gaon, following Rav Pāpā, who died in Sel. 686, AD 374/5, Rav Ashī rebuilt the "synagogue of *bē* (the house of) *Rāv* as is said in the chapter *ha-shūtāfin*" (Bāvā Batrā 3b) and made improvements; in the sources it is known as "the house of our Master in Babylonia". We do not know when the Sura yeshiva was abandoned; we have seen that Saadia Gaon resided in Baghdad, and it is clear that at an undefined time in the tenth century onwards, the Sura yeshiva was no longer in this town, but in Baghdad. Benjamin of Tudela notes that the graves of the geonim Sherira, Hayy, Saadia, and Samuel b. Hophni, of the Prophet Zephaniah b. Kushi b. Gedaliah, "and the *nesī'im* of the house of David and the heads of the yeshivot who were there before it was destroyed", were in Sura, thus it is clear that at the time of his travels, in the second half of the twelfth century, it was in ruins.

Near Sura was QAŠR, the residence of the exilarch, according to Nathan the Babylonian (above, sec. 70). A number of places in Iraq had this name (derived from the Latin *castrum*, which in Arabic assumed the meaning of fortress, also palace). It appears that it was Qašr Ibn Hubayra, that was a flourishing city in that period, half way between Baghdad and Kūfa. The Arabs also called it abbreviatedly: Qašr, as may be seen in a passage of Ibn Jawzī; he writes that the *qāḏī* Muḥassin b. ʿAlī, began his career in Qašr and in Sura (in 349, i.e., AD 960/61), from here, as well, it is evident that Qašr was near Sura. We also know about a man who would transport people in a river boat in the canal between Qašr and Sura. As to Sura's location, which was, after all, near Qašr, it is important to pay attention to what Muqaddasī writes: Qašr's drinking water was brought from the Euphrates, i.e., Sura was also near the Euphrates. It was situated in southern Iraq. Muqaddasī also notes that Qašr had many weavers and many Jews.²⁹⁰

(291) HILLA was an important Jewish center. Its full name was Hillat Banī Mazyad, because it was founded by Sayf al-dawla Ṣadaqa b. Maṣṣūr b. Dubays b. ʿAlī b. Mazyad, a scion of a family of rulers in southern Iraq, in Muḥarram 495, November 1101; previously there had been there a small

²⁹⁰ Al-Nīl: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (3.1929/30), 58f.; see Le Strange, *Lands*, 72f.; Babylon: *ibid.*, 72, and see there the map facing p. 25; Benjamin of Tudela, 42; Petahiah, 22f., 25; Daniel's synagogue in the Talmud: see Oppenheimer, in: *Battē ken. ʿat.*, 152f.; *jubb dāniyāl*: Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, II, 115; Qazwīnī, *Athār*, 202; Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, I, 93; Ibn Faḍlallāh, 232; Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī, I, 37, mentions Hārūt and Mārūt, but not Daniel. See a survey about Sura in the talmudic period: Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 413-422, with the view that there was a difference between Sura and Mātā Maḥsiya in those times. See the anonymous Syriac Chronicle (Guidi), 32, and its translation by Nöldeke, 35. According to Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 153f., it appears that Sura was close to the localities Bājuwwa and al-Quff, the three being in the proximity of Kūfa; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IV, 141, says that al-Quff is situated between Bājuwwa and Sura, as does Yāqūt, *ibid.*, I, 704; this would also bring Sura further south, to the area of Kūfa-Hilla. See the map in Le Strange, *Lands*, facing p. 25. One should notice that Benjamin of Tudela, 46, also mentions that he reached (or: that people reach) Sura via Kūfa, the distance being of "a day and half", although it remains unknown to us whether this is by the channels or by land. Hīretā de-argīz: Assaf, *Resp.*, (1929), 149, 155; cf. Obermeyer, 234, 318; and see Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 142f., who sees a contradiction between proximity to Sura and proximity to Hīra; however, the location of Sura is uncertain. The Banū Juʿf: Ibn Saʿd, VI, 100f.; see Abū Nuwās, 239, 289, and cf. Goldziher, *REJ*, 43(1910), 11f.; see Ibn Qutayba, *ʿUyūn*, I, 214, and cf. Obermeyer, 73, 271ff.; about Nahr al-Malik see Le Strange, *Lands*, 68. The synagogue of Rav: Sherira, *Letter*, 90; Berliner, *Beitr.*, 45f.; Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 41f., with the discussions on the problem of the identity of Sura and Mātā Maḥsiya. See Benjamin of Tudela (above in this note). As to the name Mātā Maḥsiya, it obviously has to be pronounced Maḥsiya, in passive participle, meaning "the city, may it be guarded (by God)", cf. Obermeyer, 982 n.1, who assumed that it was called after Maaseiah of Jer. 32:12; see in Samuel b. Hophni, *Perāqīm*, 119f., the comment of the editor, Abramson, who has a list of places in geonic literature where the yeshiva of Sura is called Mātā Maḥsiya, a name more often employed than Sura. Qašr: Muqaddasī, *Aqālīm*, 121; Ibn Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VII, 178; Suhrāb, 124: Qašr near Sura, which is called Qašr Ibn Hubayra; transportation by canal: Tanūkhī, Nishwār, II, 99; Qazwīnī in Minorsky, 139. According to Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 123, the locality is called after Yazīd b. ʿUmar Ibn Hubayra, governor of Iraq under the Umayyad caliph Marwān b. Muḥammad b. Marwān; it is this Ibn Hubayra who built a palace for himself there, close to the Sura bridge, but did not succeed in completing it before the Abbasid revolution. It was completed by the Abbasid al-Saffāh, to whom the name Ibn Hubayra was unbearable, and this is why he built a whole city there, to surround the palace, while people then called the entire city Qašr Ibn Hubayra; cf. also Friedländer, *JQR*, 17 (1904/5), 760; Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 40 n. 3; Busse, *Chalif*, 482; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 466. Mann was wrong there when he called Qašr a suburb of Baghdad.

town named al-Jāmiʿān (the two mosques), and the place turned into a bustling economic center. Makdisi wanted to push back the time of its founding to 397, AD 1007, when the Banū Mazyad began taking over the area. The city was founded on the western side of the Sura canal. It may be that the location Gamūs, mentioned by Nathan the Babylonian among the *rāshūyōt* (places under authority) of the head of the Sura yeshiva, is a corruption of Jāmiʿān, the name of this town before the city's founding. Ibn Jubayr, who visited the place in 1184, was amazed at the commercial activity and abundant merchandise. Benjamin of Tudela found there "about 10,000 Jews and four synagogues, one of them of R. Meir, who is buried in front of it, and the synagogue of R. Qeshishā, who is buried in front of it, and the synagogue of R. Ze'ira bar Ḥamā, and the synagogue of R. Marī, where Jews pray every day"; Petahiah, a few years later found the grave of "R. Meir of the Mishnā", "in a city whose name is Milī", a corruption of Hilla. The Baghdad gaon, in the second half of the twelfth century, appeals to the "holy communities of the land of Banū Mazyad and all their environs"; this happens about two generations after the establishment of the city of Hilla, and it appears that communities existed in those small localities, while Hilla, itself, had not yet been sufficiently prominent among them, even though Benjamin of Tudela, Petahiah of Regensburg and Ibn Jubayr, contemporaries all, cited it by name. It appears that the formula of the appeal of the gaon's is still according to the ancient tradition, as in that way the yeshiva would, in its letters, appeal to the area under the control of the Banū Mazyad, where there was—as is evident—a dense Jewish population. In 1822, an Arab writer, al-Munshī al-Baghdādī, writes about Hilla, noting that there were still about 100 houses of Jews; a Jewish community existed there until our recent times.

The area of Hilla also had the Narash canal, i.e., the *nahr naras*, named for the Persian king Narses, i.e., Naras Ibn Bahrām, the ruler of Iran at the end of the third century AD. The ancient settlement Narash was adjacent to it. We have no information on Jews of Narash in this period, except perhaps for the (indirect) information about them in what Mas'ūdī writes, at the start of the tenth century AD, about the *al-narasiyya* textiles (or garments), i.e., that were manufactured in Narash. Moreover: the gaon of Sura between 694-712, was Hillai (Nahilai) he-Levi, who came from Narash.

A distance of half a day away from Hilla Benjamin of Tudela finds Kifrā (apparently, the correct pronunciation) "where there are about 200 Jews, with the synagogue of R. Isaac Nappāhā, who is buried in front of it".

In the tenth century, one of the leading Karaites, Sahl b. Maṣliḥ, complains about the Rabbanites' graves cult; in Iraq, he says, they come to Shafūtā (unidentified) and to the graves of Ezekiel and Baruch (b. Neriah), light incense and beseech them for help in finding a livelihood. Details of the graves of Ezekiel and Baruch are in Yāqūt:

...near Hilla is a place called Barmalāha, next to it is the village called al-Qusūnāt; that is where the grave of Bārūkh, Ezekiel's teacher, and the grave of Joseph al-Rabbān (? perhaps he meant one of the scholars in the Talmud) are located and the grave of Joshua, this, however, is not Joshua b. Nun; and the grave of Ezra, but this is not the Ezra the Scribe who copied the Tawrah; the Jews make pilgrimages to all of these. In this place there is also the grave

of Ezekiel (Hizqīl) called (by the Muslims) Dhū'l-Kifl, and the Jews make pilgrimages to his grave from all kinds of countries.

Benjamin of Tudela adds details; Ezekiel's grave is in Bar Malāhā, three parasangs (about 18 kilometers) from Kifrā, on the river Euphrates, it is sanctified by the Jews who come to pray there, especially between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippūr; he adds many more details on the local synagogue, noting that the "great of Ishmael" come there to pray; three miles away is the locality of Qūsūnāt, with about 300 Jews, where are the graves of R. Pāpā, of R. Hūnā, of Joseph Sīnī (?), of R. Joseph bar Ḥamā, with a synagogue in front of each one; three parasangs from there is 'Ain Shafūtā (the Shafūtā mentioned by Yāqūt), where there is the grave of Nahum the Elkoshite. A detailed description of Ezekiel's grave and the miracles that take place there, is in Petahiah of Regensburg. Al-Munshī al-Baghdadi notes that the distance between Ḥilla and Dhū'l-Kifl, the prophet of the Banū Isrā'īl, who make pilgrimages to it, is five parasangs (about 30 kilometers). In a letter in the Geniza, of a man on his way to India, the writer writes among other things, "I wish to travel (via) Baghdad, God willing, I shall visit the grave of the Lord Ezekiel, then I will again set sail in the sea". He also mentions donations for (the synagogues of) Ezra and R. Meir. (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī has information according to which one pointed out another Ezekiel's grave, in a field near Samanān, in the area of Qūmis.)

Another letter from the Geniza, that can be ascribed to the area of the Banū Mazyad and Ḥilla, is the letter of Jacob the Physician, a resident of Gūmā (Ghumma?) Mazyad, who visits in Shamṭūniya, which is Shūm Ṭamia in the Talmud; the man was in Baghdad and people wanted to involve him in the controversies between its yeshivot, but he eluded them by claiming that he had to travel to visit (*azūr*, an expression meaning visiting a sanctified place) thus arriving in Shamṭūniya, it may be assumed that his intention was: visiting Ezekiel's grave; it appears that Shamṭūniya was near Ezekiel's grave; it is an example of a small town, mentioned in no other contemporary source, that had a Jewish community. There were certainly within the boundaries of Iraq and Persia, many tens of such communities. As to Shamṭūniya's location, Golb thought it was at Tall al-Shamṭūnī, south of Baghdad, on the western side of the Tigris. However, it appears that its correct location was near the Euphrates, in the area of Ḥilla.²⁹¹

²⁹¹ Ḥilla: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 322f.; Ḥimyarī, 197, who praises the beauty of Ḥilla and its surroundings, and the charming road from there to Baghdad: Qazwīnī, in Minorsky, 140; see Makdisi, *JAOS*, 74 (1954), 249; cf. the article 'al-Ḥilla' (by J. Lassner) in *EL*². Gamūs = Jāmī'an, see Nathan the Babylonian in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 86; cf. Obermeyer, 332f.; Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 172f.; Ibn Jubayr, 213f.; Benjamin of Tudela, 43; Petahiah, 17, and see the editor's note 101 on p. 43; the gaon's letter: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, I (2.1929/30), 72ff., and see the introduction *ibid.*, part I, 123 (in his first reading, Assaf ascribed the letter to Solomon Gaon b. Samuel, and see the discussion above, sec. 266). See al-Munshī al-Baghdādī, 90, and see Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 50, and also his geographical index; Le Strange, *Lands*, 71f.; Narash: Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, II, 115; al-Burāqī, 175; Hillai ha-Levi: Sherira, *Letter*, 106. On Narash in the talmudic period, see Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 258ff.; see also: Le Strange, *Lands*, 73; Kifrā: Benjamin of Tudela, 43; Isaac Nappāhā is mentioned in relation to the calendar controversy (above, sec. 143); see Ankori, *Kar. in Byz.*, 350f., and his suggestion that Nappāhā (or Nafhā) was the correct name of the locality, named after that scholar; Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 51. See Sahl b. Maṣliāh, in his commentary to Exodus,

(292) KŪFA was a city built by the Arabs after the conquest. Previously there had been a town there by the name of °Aqūlā. I have presented (above, sec. 53) the story of the Babylonian Jew who claimed that he was the messiah, and under whose leadership three churches in the area where the Euphrates forks, were put to the torch, and against whom an army was dispatched from °Aqūlā, i.e., Kūfa. A Syriac source, when speaking of Marī °Avdā, the head of a monastery, notes that his origins were in Bēt Aramayē (Iraq) "in the area of °Aqūlā, the city near Hīra". The place was called Kūfa because of the *kefifūtā* (curve), just as °Aqūlā derives from °*iqqūl* (bend), the bend of the Euphrates. In the Geniza writings we encounter Jews called al-°Aqūlī. Thus in Hayy Gaon's letter to Sahlān b. Abraham (December 1037): the gaon notes that he received a letter from Fustat, from Ḥasan al-°Aqūlī. A Geniza fragment contains a formula for calendrical reckoning, in the name of "Josiah b. Mevorakh b. al-°Aqūlī, may he rest in peace". At the place where Kūfa was built, there had previously been three monasteries. Kūfa was founded by Arab tribes after they left Hīra because they did not like it, even though prior to Islam it was a city in a suitable location with large, spacious buildings, and better air and soil than Kūfa. The distance between Hīra and Kūfa was about one parasang (about six kilometers), but Kūfa grew and "swallowed up" Hīra. *Dār al-rizq*, where the office that supplied the fighters was situated, was near *shārīc al-yahūd* (Jews' Street), between the bridge east of Kūfa, and the bridge named for the Prophet Jonah (Yūnus), and, according to Burāqī, the building in memory of the Prophet Yūnus is known "to this day", in the center of Kūfa. According to Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, part of the city was called: al-Hīra al-Bayḍa (the white one), where, because of its good air, the kings lived before Kūfa was built. It was so called, as was the name of the real Hīra, because the king of Yemen (the *tubba'*) went the wrong way and thought that he had arrived at Hīra. A Shiite tradition has it: "Makka is the *ḥaram* (sanctified place) of Abraham, al-Madīna is the *ḥaram* of Muḥammad, and Kūfa is the *ḥaram* of °Alī b. Abī Ṭālib". It is known that this place has always been a Shiite center.

Grätz raised the idea that the Jews of the Arabian Peninsula, expelled (from the northern part of the peninsula) by °Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, migrated to Iraq and settled near Kūfa; however, this opinion has no basis in the sources. We do, however, have a source that refers to the Jews in Hīra, the speech of al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, who suggests to the rebellious people of Kūfa: "stay in Hīra with the Jews and the Christians!" Abū Yūsuf writes that the Jews of Hīra converted to Islam during the time of °Umar Ibn °Abd al-°Azīz (AD 717-720).

in Mann, *Texts*, II, 87; Qūsūnāt and the graves: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 594; III 355. Benjamin of Tudela, 43ff. Cf. Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 38ff.; Petahiah, 13-17; al-Munshī al-Baghdādī, 91; the Geniza letter: TS 8 J 15, f. 28, cf. Goitein, in *Mehqārīm be-told.*, 13ff., who assumes that the writer was somewhere in the Persian Gulf. The letter is included in Goitein's collection intended for the "India Book", cf. Shaked, 85. The letter from Shamtūniya: 72; see Golb, *JNES*, 43 (1984), 154. See Oppenheimer and Lecker, *Zion*, 50(1982), 183. Shūm Ṭamia in the Talmud: *Bavā batrā*, 153a: ṭamia = °*ašāmōt*, bones; it might have been somehow related to burial traditions in that area; see also Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 408ff.; Ezekiel's grave is said to be close to Samanūn, see Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talkhīs*, I, 1196.

Nathan the Babylonian mentions among the places belonging to the authority of the exilarch, Gamūs, i.e., as stated, Jāmi'ān, where Hilla was later built, and the distance between Gamūs "and Ophīr is a walk of two days". Obermeyer already understood that Ophīr is but a corruption of Kūfa; Benjamin adds: "Ophīr (i.e., Kūfa) itself is in the *rāshūt* (authority) of Sura". In Kūfa, Benjamin of Tudela found "the grave of king Jeconiah and upon it a large building and a synagogue in front of it. It has about 7,000 Jews". Ibn Jubayr, who visited the site a few years after Benjamin (in May 1184), already found that this part of the city had been destroyed by a Bedouin tribe, the Banū Khafāja.

Close to Kūfa was SHĪL (=Shilhī, Shilhā). The gaon, "our Lord and Master Joseph, son of our Lord and Master Shīlā of Shilhī" (Pumbedita 798-804) came from there. In an addendum to a responsum regarding the *sirkhā de-libbā* (attached lungs), by the gaon Jacob ha-Kohen b. Mordecai (Sura, 798-810, i.e., at the time of Rav Joseph), it says that it was also sent to R. Joseph: "This letter was presented to us to the gate (i.e. the court; sent from) the city of Shīlā, to the great of the yeshiva, in which it is written: to the court of our Lord and Master Joseph, head of the yeshiva, son of our Lord and Master Shīlā". And what Hayy Gaon wrote: "Where we are, we call the towns Shīlōt, and a city we call Shīlā". I.e., Shīlā may have had the meaning of a city or of an ordinary small town.²⁹²

(293) By now going to the JAZIRA, which is Mesopotamia, the northern part of the country of Babylonia, we will find that its main city was MOSUL (Arabic spelling: Mawṣil), known by the Jews as Ashūr (also in Aramaic: Atūr), and sometimes, Nineveh. According to Balādhurī, during the Arab conquest there were a fortress, Christian churches and some houses that they had there, near the churches, and a Jewish quarter (*maḥallat al-yahūd*); Harthama b. 'Arfaja al-Bāriqī settled Arabs (i.e., people of the tribes) there.

²⁹² Marī 'Avdā: Chabot, *Mél. d'archéol. et d'hist.*, 16 (1896), 43; cf. Musil, *Middle Euphr.*, 250; see also Michael the Syrian, 416: Sa'd Ibn al-Waqāṣ set out from Yathrib and encamped near "Kūfa (as it should be read), which is 'Aqūla". Hasan al-'Aqūlī: 41, b, line 4, cf. Chapira, *REJ*, 82 (1926), 328. The Geniza fragment: TS 10 K 20, f. 2; see Burāqī, 104, 108, 127-131, who says that Najaf took over Kūfa, just as previously Kūfa took over Hīra; see Ibn al-Faḡīh al-Hamadhānī, *Buldān*, 181; cf. Talbot Rice, *Antiquity*, 6 (1932), 278; Kūfa was built to the north of Hīra, which continued to exist for approximately another 200 years. The Shiite tradition: al-Tūsī, *Āmālī*, II, 284 (the second half of the eleventh century); see Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 119, followed by Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 472. The speech of al-Ḥajjāj: Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 955; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IV, 425; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, IX, 17; the conversion to Islam: Abū Yūsuf, 202; see also: Nathan the Babylonian, in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 86; cf. Obermeyer, 332f.; Benjamin of Tudela, 45. Benjamin found in Kūfa also "the great sanctuary of the Ishmaelites where 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib, the son-in-law of *meshūgā'* is buried, where the Ishmaelites visit the harlots". Ibn Jubayr, 211-213. Shīlī: see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 358; Joseph b. Shīlā: Sherira, *Letter*, 109; *sirkhā de-libbā*: *Sefer ha-pard*. (Budapest), 127; cf. Lewin, in Sherira's *Letter*, *ibid.*, note b, inclusive of Hayy Gaon's comment. See Harkavy, *Resp.*, 14 (no. 36); also: Kis, *Resp.*, 15: "written by Manasseh ha-Kohen son of our Master Jacob, of blessed memory, as written by our Lord Hayy in his quire": Shīlā means: a city. The general opinion was that Shilhā (Shilhī) was close to Sura, based on *Bāvā batrā*, 172a, where it says that it was close to the place of Rav Hūnā (who was in Sura); see Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 464. See also Ginzberg, *Geon.*, I, 41 n.1, and his controversy with Berliner, *Beitr.*, 33 n.1, who wrote that Shīlī was close either to Pumbedita or to Sura; since, as we saw above, Yāqūt states that it was close to Kūfa, it becomes self-evident that Shīlī was rather close to Sura.

Syriac texts mention the Mosul fortress, *ḥiṣnā ʿavriyā*; it was the ancient fortress that protected Nineveh from the west, i.e., on the western side of the Tigris, with Nineveh opposite it, on the eastern side, from here the name of the fortress—"the fortress on the other side of the river"; the name does not mean: the Hebrews' fortress, as some have assumed. It appears that the Jews of Mosul, either some of them or all of them, did actually live within the city's fortress. In all events, we see that the letter of the exilarch David b. Daniel against Solomon b. Samuel, of Acre (above, sec. 260), in 1288, was written in "*Ḥiṣnā(!) ʿAvrā(!)* the city of Atūr, situated on the river Tigris".

There is no doubt that Mosul had a Jewish community since ancient times, as testified by the Arabic sources that mention the *maḥallat al-yahūd*, that existed at the time of the conquest. Above, I have mentioned Mosul a number of times regarding matters of the yeshivot and the exilarchs. I have already mentioned (above, sec. 239) the existence of a philosophy study group among the Mosul Jews in the tenth century. Mosul had a local *dayyān*, with the title of *alūf*, who was, as customary, a representative of the yeshiva. At about 990, Ṣemaḥ b. Isaac, the recently appointed Sura gaon, mentions "Sahl *alūf* b. *alūf* our representative in Mosul". In May 1041, during the time of the controversy of Nathan b. Abraham, it was transmitted that a *rōsh kallā* from Mosul had arrived in Ramla, i.e., he was apparently a *dayyān* in Mosul; he refused to be involved in the controversy, because he belonged to the *rāshūt* of Babylonia. Benjamin of Tudela writes of Mosul that it was "the great Ashūr", and had about 7,000 Jews. He arrived there (if he had indeed visited there himself), apparently via the Tigris, from Jazīrat Ibn ʿUmar (a distance of two days). He found the head of the Mosul Jews then to be "R. Zakkai the *nāsī* of the seed of David, and R. Joseph, known as Burhān al-Falak" (above, sec. 248). He mentions the Nineveh ruins, on the other side of the Tigris, to which there was a bridge. According to him, Mosul had the synagogue of Obadiah, "built by Jonah; and the synagogue of Naḥum the Elkoshite". Al-Ḥarīzī wrote a poem about the benefactors of Mosul and the qualities of some of its inhabitants; he especially has praise for "al-Rayyis Abū'l-Faraj Ibn al-Khaṣābī", one of the distinguished members of the community.

Petahiah of Regensburg came to "new Nineveh", which, of course, is Mosul, from Nisibis, in eight days. He notes that it is on the Tigris, and that the ruins of "old Nineveh" are opposite. He found "about more than 6,000" Jews there, and mentions whom Benjamin did not, the two *nesī'im*, David and Samuel (above, sec. 255).²⁹³

²⁹³ Mosul: Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 332; Ibn al-Faḳīh, *Buldān*, 129; Ḥimyārī, 564; Mosul's fortress: Nöldeke, *Syrische Chr.*, 22; Segal, in the *M.H. Segal Jub. Vol.*, 37, who assumes that the fortress is the *maḥallat al-yahūd* of the Arabic sources. See also: Sarre u. Herzfeld, II, 208; Fiey, *Mossoul*, 1. The exilarch's letter: Halberstam, *Jeschurun*, 7(1870/71), 75; Ṣemaḥ Sedeq's letter: 45, line 14, and also in its continuation; cf. Mann, *Tarbīz*, 5 (1933/4), 172 n.76, who finds here proof that Mosul returned to Sura's authority, when the latter was renewed. The *rōsh kallā* who came from Mosul: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 342f. (no. 195); Benjamin of Tudela, 34; cf. Ibn Jubayr, 236: vis-à-vis Mosul, one mile to the east, there is Tall al-tawba (the hill of repentance) on which Jonah stood and prayed until God abolished the punishment of Nineveh's people; people gather there every Friday evening to pray (obviously, Jews are meant, but Ibn Jubayr avoids specifying that); he also mentions the ruins of Nineveh; al-Ḥarīzī, see Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 15 (1902/3), 695; Petahiah, 5-7.

(294) About 200 kilometers southeast of Mosul was the small town of DAQŪQA, or DAQŪQ, also mentioned in the sources as ʿTawūq, and also mentioned in the letter of Samuel b. Eli together with BAQASRĪ and Shahrgird; these three communities are not fulfilling their obligations towards the yeshiva, i.e., the local people are not sending the monies due to it; the gaon informs them that he is sending “our Lord and Master Jacob *rōsh bē rabbānān*, son of our Master Eli”, to teach them Torah. Al-Ḥarīzī mentions the *jamāʿa* (community) of Daqūqa favorably; they had a *nāsī* (i.e., a member of the exilarchic dynasty) “ʿAzariah b. al-Nāsikha” (son of the female scribe, the copier, this is exceptional in all the sources of the period); and sings his praises. Shahrgard and Baqasrī are somewhat of a mystery, I do not know how to identify them with certainty. It means that the three communities were close to each other.

IRBIL, ancient Arbela, is situated about 100 kilometers east of Mosul; it was an important commercial center, and developed especially in the first half of the thirteenth century. The gaon, Samuel b. Eli, writes a letter in 1193 to “our brethren, the praised holy communities which include the height of beauty and gather in the city of Arbāl” (!) etc. It is interesting that the Jews pronounced it Arbāl (reminding of Arbela), and the Arabs: Irbil. Benjamin of Tudela mentions the place: Arbāl (this is the correct version), near the ruins of Nineveh. Al-Ḥarīzī writes about the ‘scandal’ that he saw “among the prophets of Arbal”, namely the behavior of a local person by the name of Ben *ha-sānūy* (son of the hated one), who took the *yešyōt* (short *piyyūḥim*) of Moses Ibn Ezra, and arranged them in a poem of his (this appears to be what he means); and in his Arabic *maqāma* he notes that there are in the city educated and fair people, favorably citing for praise Mubārak, i.e., Khalaf al-Šā’igh (the goldsmith).

We have already seen (above, sec. 268) the matter of ʿAlī b. Zechariah, an Irbil resident, who was appointed gaon in Baghdad in 1251. In one of the letters of the later *nesīʿim*, the letter of Jesse b. Solomon, 1254, to his father Solomon, he informs him that he had previously sent a letter (or letters) via a certain Khalaf al-Irbilī, and I have already mentioned (above, sec. 280) the matter of Joseph ha-Kohen b. ʿAlī b. Aaron, who, “in the city of Arbāl”, copied Maimonides’ “Guide for the Perplexed” in its Arabic original, in 1275.²⁹⁴

(295) NEŠIVIN (Nisibis), an ancient city often mentioned in the talmudic literature, located in the center of Mesopotamia; it was the main center of learning of eastern Christianity. Benjamin of Tudela notes that “it has many brooks”; he has little praise for it, as compared with the abundant praise found in the Arab geographers; he notes that it has about 1,000 Jews. Al-Ḥarīzī did not, apparently, receive much notice there, as he found them

²⁹⁴ Daqūqa, see Le Strange, *Lands*, 92, who notes that the Arab geographers do not mention it. See the letter of Samuel b. Eli, in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (3.1929/30), 38-40, and see the introduction *ibid.*, part 1, 121f. (Daqūqa), 125 (Shahrgird), 121 (Bāqasard, Bāqasrī); see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 581; see the article “Dakūka” in *IEJ* (by S.H. Longrigg); see al-Ḥarīzī, in Stern, *Sefunot*, 8 (1964), 149. Assaf (above in this note) mentions the sermons of Isaac Sar Šālōm in Raqūq, which is probably garbled, and should be: Daqūq. See Neubauer, *Cat.*, I, 214 (no. 1001). Irbil: see the letter of Samuel b. Eli, in Assaf, *ibid.* (part 3), 27-32, and *idem* in part 1, 121. Benjamin of Tudela, 34; al-Ḥarīzī, *Taḥkemōnī*, 195; *idem*, in Ratzaby, *Biqqoret u-f.*, 15 (1979/80), 46f.; Khalaf al-Irbilī: 101; cf. on Irbil also: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 186-189; Le Strange, *Lands*, 921; and the article “Irbil” in *IEJ* (by D. Sourdell).

constantly preoccupied with making money, prefer being ill-spoken of, flee from generosity and good qualities. Petahiah of Regensburg found a "large community with the synagogue of R. Judah b. Betīra, and two synagogues built by Ezra the Scribe, one of which contained a red stone set in the wall that Ezra brought back with him from the stones of the Temple".

About 50 kilometers south of Mosul, on the Tharthar river, was the city of ḤADR, Roman Hatra, and it appears that this is the Hātara, most of whose inhabitants, according to Yāqūt, are Jews, "and to this day, they say in Baghdad: it's as if you were a Hātara Jew". Benjamin of Tudela mentions a place that he calls Ḥadara, identical, apparently, with the above; he found the place to have about 15,000 Jews, led by "R. Zāqēn and R. Joseph and R. Nethanel".

SINJĀR was about 40 kilometers from Mosul to the east. Nahmanides mentions "the *hāvēr*, who converted the Khazarī king to Judaism, whose name is Isaac al-Shinjārī". I have already mentioned the poet Solomon al-Sinjārī (above, sec. 242). Al-Ḥarīzī found a small community there, one of whose distinguished members was ʿAbd al-Sayyid al-Mawṣilī; and he praises the fine intellect of the people of the community and expresses his sorrow that ʿAbd al-Sayyid's generosity was not as great as his intelligence.

At the eastern end of Mesopotamia, on the left side of the Euphrates, was the city of RAQQA, which was kind of a border point between Syria and Mesopotamia, which was also its status before Islam; Raqqa, whose name was then Callinicum, was a customs station. The order of Emperor Justinian, of the 540s, set a customs duty of 15 *nomismas* (the Byzantine gold coin) for a *litra* (=raṭl, pound) of *metaxa* (raw silk) arriving from the Barbarians; a person not belonging to the commercial class (*commercarius*) was banned from buying silk, doing so would incur the expropriation of all of his property; silk could not be sold secretly, only openly. There is almost no doubt that this decree was aimed against the Jews, for the lion's share of the silk trade was in their hands. It appears that the aforementioned Latin name of Raqqa, was why the Jews gave it the nickname of Kalnē; yet it may also be the converse, i.e., that this biblical Hebrew name was indeed Raqqa's ancient name. For Qirqisānī, at the beginning of the tenth century, Raqqa was the most westerly point of Babylonia, for the way the Bible, in the Babylonian version, was read was common, according to him, "from the border of Raqqa to the border of China". Raqqa was the city of David al-Muqammiṣ (above, sec. 208). Raqqa was one of those places (successfully) visited at the beginning of the eleventh century, by a person pretending to be of the exilarchic dynasty, a *nāsī*. In an act of the *bēt dīn*, of about 1015, that was apparently written in Tyre, a Raqqa man is mentioned: b. Isqoi the Kalnī, of interest is the Persian form of the father's name. A letter from Raqqa, of about 1030, is preserved in the Geniza, written by Elijah ha-Kohen *bēt dīn* (=chief judge of the court) b. Abraham, to Jacob *he-hāvēr* b. Joseph in Ḥalab. Even though the name Raqqa does not appear in the letter, it may be concluded that this was the place, for it says that the city is situated on the Euphrates, five-days sailing distance from Baghdad. The writer refers to three communities that are in his city, certainly Babylonians, Palestinians, and Karaites. He is the local *dayyān*, having received his appointment from the heads of the Babylonian yeshivot and the exilarch—which shows that the local people affiliated themselves with

Babylonia, not Syria (i.e., not to the Palestinian *rāshūt*). The writer notes that his appointment had been renewed "in letters from our Lord Hezekiah the exilarch of all the Jewish diasporas, and our Master Hayy, head of the yeshiva", that were sent via a person by the name of Ezekiel the Babylonian. He notes that together with him in his locality were "scholars of the land of Edom", including R. Karmī and R. Judah, who study Mishnā and Talmud with him, and to do so, had come from the "city of Šōva", i.e., Ḥalab. He also writes in his letter about the relations between the Rabbanites and the Karaites, and how he overcame, with the help of the authorities, a contrivance of one of the Karaites. From about the same time, there is a letter from a Ḥalab man, apparently, writing to the Palestinian gaon, Solomon b. Judah, regarding controversies in his community; he notes: "tomorrow, I am going to Kalnē, for I have been informed that a quarrel broke out there.... because of the death of the judge"; the controversy, so it would seem, was about the appointment of a local *dayyān*, because of "al-Lādhīqī's wish to be appointed over them". We can identify this 'Lādhīqī' (the Lādhīqī family originated in Lādhīqiyya, as the name shows), Dōsā b. Joshua *he-ḥāvēr* al-Lādhīqī. The Lādhīqī family lived in Raqqa, and we also have a letter of the mother of the family to Dōsā, her son. All the men in the family had emigrated to Egypt, thus Dōsā did not realize his aspiration of receiving the post of *dayyān* in Raqqa; it appears that, in Egypt, Dōsā engaged in commerce; the mother of the family, who remained in Raqqa with her daughter and the daughter's family, expresses deep longing in her letter, she also has requests of her son: Ṣfahānī *kuhl* (antimony), a sky blue *mi'jar* (veil, or scarf) with blue embroidery, and other items. In another letter it transpires that another son of the family, °Alī b. Joshua, perhaps the aforementioned Dōsā's brother, was appointed regular *ḥazzān* (cantor) of Raqqa and in charge of the congregation; °Alī was called to fill some position in Jerusalem, but did not succeed in reaching cooperation with the Sijlmāssa family of *kōhanīm* (sons of the gaon, Solomon b. Joseph), and returned to be the regular cantor of Raqqa. From here we see that the Palestinian yeshiva had ties and status also in this clearly Babylonian location.

Benjamin of Tudela mentions "Raqqa, which is Kalnē (as it should be read) at the beginning of the land of Shinar (=Babylonia, when coming from Syria) which divides between the land of Togarmah (=Saljūqs) and the kingdom of Shinar". He found there "about 700 Jews, led by R. Zakkai and R. Nadiv, who is blind, and R. Joseph". According to him, Ezra managed to build a synagogue in Raqqa before going from Babylonia to Jerusalem, and it still stood in the days of Benjamin ("where there is a synagogue built by Ezra"). In 1191, Samuel b. Eli sends them a kind of circular letter that was also sent to other communities in Mesopotamia and Syria, lauding the status of the yeshiva and downplaying the importance of the exilarchate. In Kalnē, al-Ḥarīzī found "a fine community, all of them pious and fearers of Heaven", however, he censures their stinginess and lack of generosity; in another place, he mentions "a person of Kalnē, whom I have praised in my poem, who fled from me to Ḥarān and hid himself from me", and reproaches him and resents him; even though they were famous for fine qualities, in his mind there was room also for disapproval. He slanders some of the local people: Berakhōt b. Yeshū'a (in two places),

the two brothers, Šemaḥ and Obadiah, Simḥa the Tadmorite and his son, Yūsha^c, and also Ḥalaftā and Hezekiah. Likewise in his Arabic *maqāma*; in Sarūj, he met a Raqqa man, one of the government *dīwān* scribes, Isaac b. Ibrahīm al-Nafīs (apparently an abbreviation of Nafīs al-dawla), one of the heads of the Raqqa community. Al-Ḥarīzī claims that the quality of the community may be gauged by the lowliness of its leader. Further on he notes their wealth, the likes of which he had never seen before, nor such misers. This time he has good things to say about Simḥa the Tadmorite. We also have a letter of a person who was in Kalnē, written in May 1197; the writer had been in Egypt and knew the personalities of Fustat, and sends regards to Maimonides and his son Abraham, his father-in-law Mishael, and other community figures; he copies books for one of the heads of the Raqqa community, R. Joseph, who may be the Joseph mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela (above). The letter is written in the *maqāma* style of al-Ḥarīzī, and it is not beyond question, that it might have been of Judah al-Ḥarīzī himself.

At a distance of one day from Raqqa, Benjamin of Tudela says, is the fortress of *Qalʿat Gabar* (which should be: Ja^cbar); according to him, it remained in Arab hands after the Saljūqs ('the Togarmites') conquered the Jazīra. Benjamin found there "about 2,000 Jews, led by R. Zedekiah and R. Ḥiyyā and R. Solomon". Among the communities that the gaon, Samuel b. Eli, appeals to, in the above mentioned letter that he wrote in 1191, and in which Raqqa is first mentioned, there is also mention of al-Qalʿa, which is undoubtedly Qalʿat Ja^cbar, near Raqqa. The fortress (*qalʿa*) was on the left bank of the Euphrates; its ancient name was: Dawsar, for the Arabs; ancient Dausara. Al-Ḥarīzī lauds the community there for its piety and generosity, and praises the qualities of a certain Joseph Ibn Ya^cqūb.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ Nešivīn: Benjamin of Tudela, 33; al-Ḥarīzī, in Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 15 (1902/3), 694; Petahiah, 4f.; cf. Le Strange, *Lands*, 94f.; Segal, in *M.H. Segal Jub. Vol.* (English part), 38f.; Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 319-334. Ḥadr, Ḥaṭārā, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 294 (Ḥaṭārā), cf. Le Strange, *ibid.*, 98f. (Ḥadr); although the distances indicated by Yāqūt apparently preclude this identification, it is, however, acceptable, at least as an assumption. See Benjamin of Tudela, 34f.; see another opinion in Ben-Jacob, *Yehūdē b.*, 50; see in Borchardt, *JJLG*, 16 (1924), 141, the supposition that this locality is Samarrā, which he considers to be a certainty, but is, in my view, totally unacceptable, because of the fact above, that Samarrā was a military and administrative center, which excludes the possibility of its having had a large Jewish population. Sinjār: see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 98f., and the map facing p. 87. Nahmanides, *Torat H. temimā* (Jellinek), 14, and see there the editor's note; cf. Dunlop, 121ff.; Schirmann, *Shirim ḥad.* 46ff.; al-Ḥarīzī, in Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 15 (1902/3), 694. Raqqa, see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 101f.; the order of Justinian, see in Zachariae v. Lingenthal, *Mémoires* (Petersburg 1865), I, 5, 13ff.; see Qirgisānī, *Anwār*, 135; the bogus *nāsi* were in Raqqa: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 37-40 (no. 24): b. Isqoi the Kalnī: Gil, *ibid.*, II, 479, line 10 (no. 270); Elijah ha-Kohen's letter: *ibid.*, 73, and see *ibid.*, in the preamble more references; the letter to the gaon: Gil, *ibid.*, 1059f. (no. 287). Dōsā's mother's letter: 89, cf. TS Box K 15, f. 7, in Mann, *Jews*, II, 270; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, V, 224; Gil, *Hist.*, 514f., n. 23; the regular cantor: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 356-358 (no. 198); cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 571, n. 64, 685f. and n. 139; see Benjamin of Tudela, 33; Samuel b. Eli's letter: in Assaf, *Tarbiz.*, I (2. 1919/30), 62ff., and see *ibid.*, part I, 124f.; al-Ḥarīzī, 194, 364, 393f., 402f.; *idem*, in Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 15 (1902/3), 686, 693 (the poems and the man who fled to Ḥārān, edited there, is found also in the Toporowski edition, 393, and in Ratzaby, *Biqqoret u-f.*, 15 (1979/80), 42-44. The letter from Raqqa: 90, and see in its preamble more references. Qalʿat Ja^cbar: Benjamin of Tudela, 32f.; the gaon's letter: above in this note, and see Assaf's (unjustified) doubts, *ibid.*, part I, 124. See Le Strange, *ibid.*, 102; Dussaud, *Topogr.*, 458; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 630: its ancient name was Dūs; *idem*, XI, 109f., writes about the failed siege of Qalʿat Ja^cbar by the

(296) The city of HĀRĀN, called by the Arabs Ḥarrān, was about 100 kilometers north of Raqqa. It is an ancient city, mentioned in the Bible, and known in later times for its inhabitants' unique faith, recorded in the Arabic sources, the religion of the *ṣābi'ūn*. Benjamin of Tudela found about 20 Jews there, and the Ezra the Scribe synagogue, but "on that place where the house of Terah and Abraham, his son, was, there is no building"—he means that the original building no longer stands; nevertheless, the "Ishmaelites honor the place and come there to pray". Al-Ḥarīzī mocks the Hārān community, where he met "R. Ṣedāqā who fears Heaven, but whose hands are closed"; the physician, R. Maṣliḥ, a clamorous man, "who shouts and vociferates at his enemies"; Obadiāh b. Eli, the "royal scribe", is "devoid of wisdom and knowledge"; and more similar opinions. Elsewhere, he lashes out at the people of Hārān because of their stinginess, mentions Maṣliḥ (the physician) this time favorably, for his fear of Heaven, and mentions the above Ṣedāqā, who is "the son of Zākī". Hārān (Ḥarrān) is one of the communities the gaon Samuel b. Eli appeals to in his 1191 letter.

In that letter, the gaon appeals also to the RUHĀ community, i.e., Edessa, i.e., Urfa. There was an ancient Jewish community in Edessa, the talmudic Hadas. We have seen (above, sec. 209) the matter of Iṣḥāq b. ʿAlī al-Ruhāwī, the physician and writer of the ninth century. The Crusaders conquered the city in 1098, and it appears that the Jews of the city were forced to flee; in all events, the community ceased to exist. December 1101, was when an inscription found in Ruṣāfa (about 150 kilometers south of Edessa, south of the Euphrates' right bank), was written that testifies to the opening of a building (perhaps a new synagogue?); the name of the person who wrote the inscription was Zākī b. Barakāt, also mentioned are the Jews of Ruhā (*yahūd al-qal'a al-ruhā*), and it is reasonable to assume that these were the Ruhā refugees who fled to Ruṣāfa. When the Saljūqs captured Ruhā from the Crusaders, in 1144, the Saljūqi ruler, Zangī, brought about 300 Jewish families, including women and children, and settled them in the city.

Al-Ḥarīzī says of the people of Ruhā, that they were *dhawū adab*, i.e., educated people; he mentions the *ḥazzān* Joseph, saying he was a man of integrity; Ḥassān, a good person; but most of them are misers; he notes that they originated in Ra's al-ʿAyn, which is perhaps connected to that Jewish settling in Ruhā, organized by Zangī, about two generations before al-Ḥarīzī's visit.

According to the inscription that I just mentioned, and other inscriptions from there, it becomes clear that there was a Jewish community in RUṢĀFA as well. However, we do not yet have any other information about it. In the inscriptions we read about the consecration of "this blessed place"; Abū'l-Riḍā b. Zakī is mentioned; and the year Sel. 1428, i.e., 1117, is inscribed there.

RAḤBA, mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela, was "a journey of three days" from Irbil (as it should be read). According to him, there were "about 2,000 Jews, led by R. Hezekiah, R. Ṭāhōr, and R. Isaac", and he also notes that it was a pleasant, large, fortified city, surrounded by gardens and

Saljūqs; it remained for centuries as a fief of a bedouin family of the Banū ʿUqayl, which fits the passage in Benjamin of Tudela. See al-Ḥarīzī, in Ratzaby (above in this note), 43.

orchards. The gaon Samuel b. Eli mentions the Raḥba community in a letter of 1191. At about the middle of the eleventh century, we find a whole group of people coming from Raḥba, who are called al-Raḥbī, after the name of the town, among the merchants connected with the circle of Nehorai b. Nissim.

QARQISIYA was close to Raḥba; it was the place where the important Karaite writer, al-Qirqisānī came from. It was on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. Benjamin of Tudela mentions it: "Qarqisiya is Carchemish (which is not correct) on the bank of the Euphrates river, with about 500 Jews, led by R. Isaac and R. Elḥanan". It is the ancient Circesium. It is Yāqūt who vocalizes: Qarqisiya. Right by the Khābūr estuary of the Euphrates, near Raḥba and Qarqisiya, was Mijdal (in Yāqūt's vocalization); al-Ḥarīzī mentions it, praising the community for its beneficence, refinement, education and honesty.

RA'S AL-ʿAYN was so called because it was built on the Khābūr's water sources. This is cited by Benjamin of Tudela: "the al-Kabīr river, which is the Ḥabūr, flows from there to the land of Media and pours into the river (as it should be read) Gōzān; and it has 200 Jews".

SARŪJ was situated on an important junction: the road leading from Raqqa northwards, and the road that led from the southeast to Hārān and to the route over the Euphrates (*jisr Manbij*). The gaon Samuel b. Eli includes the Sarūj community among the communities to which he appeals in the aforementioned letter of 1197. Al-Ḥarīzī met there the "benefactor R. Eleazar the Babylonian", the kind of person he liked, generous and hospitable; actually, in his Arabic *maqāma*, he finds them a *jamāʿa yasīra* (a small community), and expresses distaste for their negative qualities, especially in regard to two people from elsewhere who had settled in the town (so it is implied): Mubārak al-Baʿlabakkī, and the Raqqa man I mentioned before, Isaac b. Ibrahīm al-Nafīs; he reiterates his praise for the Baghdadi, Abū Manṣūr Ibn Abī Yāsir (who is none other than the aforementioned Eleazar the Babylonian). In a brief letter from Palermo, of about the mid-twelfth century, there is mention of a merchant, Hārūn b. al-Sarūjī, who was staying in Sicily to purchase goods destined for Damascus. In al-Bīra, on the Euphrates route, al-Ḥarīzī met a Karaite who had left the sect and became a Rabbanite, a man from Egypt by the name of Thiqa al-dawla Sulaymān, for whom he wrote a poem of praise. The gaon, Samuel b. Eli, included al-Bīra among the communities that he turned to in 1191.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Hārān: see Le Strange, *Lands*, 103; the article Hārān in *EL*² (by Fehérvári); Benjamin of Tudela, 33; al-Ḥarīzī, *Tahkemoni*, 364; see the *maqāma* in Arabic, in Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 15(1902/3), 693f. (where in the continuation there is a misunderstanding in the English translation); see *idem* also in Ratzaby, *Bigqoret u-f*, 15(1979/80), 44. See also: Ibn Jubayr, 244-248; the letter of Samuel b. Eli, see in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2.1929/30), 62ff and see *ibid.*, part 1, 122f; he mentions MS Bodl, Neubauer, *Cat.*, 2849, no. 13—*piyyūṭim* of a man from Hārān. Ruhā: see mention in the Talmud, in Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 133; see the inscription: Caquot, *Syria*, 32 (1955), 70ff., and its photography there. In the first two lines I read (translation of the Arabic): "it was opened in the month of Tevet of the year 1413; Zākī b. Barakāt of blessed memory wrote it; in that year the Jews of Qalʿa came (?) to Ruhā". (I was not able to read the continuation; what Caquot read there does not make sense); see *ibid.* also more inscriptions from Ruṣāfa. Zanjī, 1144: the anonymous *Syriac Chronicle* ("until 1234"), II, 137 (translation from the Aramaic): "about 300 Jewish families with their wives and children were brought and settled in Ūrhī". Cf. Segal, *Edessa*, 251, who does not give any reference. See the gaon's letter, in Assaf, *ibid.* (above in this letter), and see *ibid.*,

(297) In northwest Persia (the area of the Daylamīs, south of the Caspian Sea), Benjamin of Tudela mentions RUDBĀR (his spelling: Rudbar), "with about 20,000 Jews, including scholars and wealthy people, yet who dwell in great (=harsh) exile". The place is near Alamūt, to the east, where the *hashīshiyān* (Assassins) are located, called by Benjamin Muḥāt (above, sec. 248), populated by extreme Isma'īlīs who ruled over the area. In the west, in the land of the Daylamīs, were also Abhar, the place of origin of Sa'd al-dawla, which certainly had a Jewish community (above, sec. 277); and AMŪL, in Ṭabaristān, near the southern shore of the Caspian sea; that is where *ben Solomon*, whom I mention in regard to the matter of the Tustaris, came from (below, sec. 371).

If we turn westwards from that area, we will find QAZWĪN, one of the main cities in northern Jibāl (i.e., Media); Qazwīn was for many years in the caliphate frontier region, one of the *amṣār*, the fortified cities built to prevent incursion by the unbelievers. Evidence of the existence of a Jewish community is in Qazwīnī's information regarding the city's Jewish cemetery. In his day, the mid-thirteenth century, after the Mongol conquest, it was already, according to him, a broad expanse, with no signs of graves.

In the center of Persian Kurdistan, which was part of Jibāl in the Middle Ages, east of the Tigris, was the city of SHAHRZŪR; according to Yāqūt, many of the inhabitants claimed descent from Ṭālūt, King Saul in Arab tradition. He has a tradition connecting the place with David and Solomon, and with David's encounter with Jālūt, i.e., Goliath the Philistine. However, we have no clear proof about the existence there of a Jewish community.

At the western edge of Jibāl, on the great Khurāsān road, stood ḤULWĀN. Nathan the Babylonian mentions it; the city belonged to the exilarch's *rāshūt*: "another place, called Hulwān; between it and Babylon (Baghdad), there is a distance of five days, and he receives 150 golden coins (dinars) a year". Sherira Gaon has other things to say in one of his letters: "this is to inform you that the *rāshūt* of Halah and Habor and their environs, are included in our *rāshūt*"; he means northern Mesopotamia (the area of Irbil) and the western part of Media (Ḥulwān). Muqaddasī mentions *darb* (street of the) *al-yahūd*, and the *al-yahūdiyya* street in Ḥulwān (one of

part 1, 124; see al-Ḥarīzī in Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 15 (1902/3), 964. Raḥba: Benjamin of Tudela, 34; see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 764-767, who cites Balādhurī, where it says that the city was founded in the days of al-Ma'mūn. Its name in Arabic sources is Raḥbat Mālik b. Ṭawq, after one of Ḥārūn al-Rashīd's retainers; Yāqūt cites from the Bible (*al-tūrīya*) that it was built by Nāmūd b. Kūsh (referring in fact to Rehoboth, see Gen. 10:8-12). See also al-Ḥarīzī, *Ṭaḥkemōni*, 208: "and it happened one day that I arrived in the city of Reḥōvōt" and there follows an insipid story of how he (al-Ḥarīzī) cheated a villager. The gaon's letter: as above in this note; people called al-Raḥbī, see below, in the book's index. Qarqisiyya: see Le Strange, *Lands*, 105 (where by mistake it says the Tigris instead of the Euphrates), and see his map, facing p. 25; see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 65: 6 parasangs (about 36 km.) from Raḥba. Mījdal: Yāqūt, *ibid.*, IV, 418; al-Ḥarīzī, in Hirschfeld, *ibid.* 694. Ra's al-ʿAyn: Benjamin of Tudela, 33; see the editor's notes 2, 3, in the English part, 33: the Khābūr flows through Mosopotamia, not through Media; apparently Benjamin was under the influence of 2 Ki 17:6: "in the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes". Sarūj: see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 108; the gaon's letter: in Assaf, *ibid.*, and see his comments in part 1 of his article, 124; see al-Ḥarīzī, 364; and Ratzaby *Biqqoret u-f.*, 15(1979/80), 42. The letter from Palermo: TS 8 J 23, f. 7. Al-Bīra: in Ratzaby, *ibid.*, 27 n. 62. The gaon's letter, in Assaf, *ibid.*, and his comments in part 1 of his article, 121.

its eight streets), where their most distinguished synagogue was located, outside the city, built of gypsum and stones; according to him, it had many distinguished Jews, scholars; only the Jerusalem Temple was more spacious than this synagogue, and had more elders and scholars than it. The Jewish quarter in Ḥulwān is also mentioned in the Syriac book, *History of Sawrīshū*^c (end of the sixth century AD).

There was also a Jewish community in KURKĀN (as it should be pronounced, according to Yāqūt), which, according to Ibn al-Faḡīh, was a village near Qarmīsin (i.e., Kirmanshāh), where there was a large annual fair. It was apparently to the Jews of Kurkān that the gaon, Samuel b. Eli, appealed ("to the holy community which is in al-Kurkān"), in 1186, asking them to strengthen their ties to the yeshiva; also writing to them is the gaon Zechariah b. Berakhel, in 1194 ("to the holy community residing in the city of al-Kurkān"), with a similar request. Al-Ḥarīzī visited them, and found that there were no longer any honest and beneficent people there, only bad people who had abandoned the ways of their ancestors.

In the land of the Kurds, there was also the locality of KHAFTIYĀN, apparently identical with Kuftidagān, one of the places where the gaon, Samuel b. Eli, sent letters in 1185 and 1187; as did, later, his successor Zechariah b. Berakhel, in 1194. In the first letter, the place is called Kuftidagān Zarizān. Samuel b. Eli mentions the people of the place, two brothers, Shemariah and Aaron, sons of Ghābā, and also: Naṣr, Mūsā b. Khalaf, Abraham, and Eli. He sent them an emissary, the *dāyyān* Jacob b. Eli. Zechariah b. Berakhel also mentions along with Kuftidagān, the nearby city of Sūsiyā, but it is not mentioned in other sources. Yāqūt writes of Khuftiyān, which is the name of two very large fortresses; one of them on the road to Marāgha (capital of Adharbayjān), also known as Khuftiyān al-Zarzārā (recalling the aforementioned Zarizān), and the other, Khuftiyān Surkhāb b. Badr, on the Shahrzūr road; the name is also written: Khuftidhakān; it may be that of the yeshiva's letters, the first (Kuftidagān Zarizān) was meant for the congregation in the fortress which Yāqūt mentions first, and the others to the other fortress.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ Rūdbar, see Benjamin of Tudela, 50; cf. Schwarz, *Iran*, 255; Madelung, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, IV, 208; cf. also Le Strange, *Lands*, 173; see the map in Hodgson, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, V, 431. Abhar, see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 221f.; Amūl was the capital of Ṭabaristān, its main city and an important trade center, see Le Strange, *ibid.*, 370. Qazwīn: Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, II, 292, cf. Schwarz, *Iran*, 720. Shahrzūr: see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 341, cf. Schwarz, *ibid.*, 698, 700. Ḥulwān, see Nathan the Babylonian in Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 86; Sherira Gaon: 28, x line 17; see on Halah and Habor above, n. 226; Muqaddasī, *Aḡālīm*, 123; "The History of Sawrīshū" in Fiey, *Parole de l'Or.*, 1(1970), 362. Kurkān, Kurkāni: see Ibn al-Faḡīh, 214; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 261; Schwarz, *Iran*, 490; letters of the yeshiva to there: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2.1929/30), 52f.; part 3, 19-21; Assaf, *ibid.*, part 1, 123, assumed that Khurkhan(!) was "a town in the country of Qūmis", following Yāqūt, but I think my interpretation is more credible. See al-Ḥarīzī, in Stern, *Sefunot*, 8 (1963/4) 149, and see the editor's comments *ibid.*, 150 n. 1, who opposes Assaf's proposal, but his own view "it is certainly located between Irbil and Daqūqa" (i.e. in Mesopotamia), is not plausible, and there is no indication of such a locality there. Kuftidagān, see Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (2. 1929/30), 55-58, and part 2, 55f., and Assaf's comments *ibid.*, part 1, 123f.; see also Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 456; cf. Le Strange, *ibid.*, 193; Schwarz, *ibid.*, 687. It seems that Pashtisōl, Malkasra, Yazdādān, Hanbarīn, towns whose names are preserved in a small fragment, apparently from the time of Samuel Gaon b. Eli, belong to the same area, see BL 10578S, f. 13.

(298) The foremost city of Jibāl (Media), was HAMADĀN (in the Arabic sources: Hamadhān), the biblical Achmeta. It is mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela: "it is Media, its great city, with about 30,000 (another version: 50,000) Jews. Mordecai and Esther are buried outside a synagogue". The gaon, Samuel b. Eli, wrote them, and two fragmented letters of his have been preserved, whose dates are unknown to us.

Also to be mentioned is NIHĀWAND, where Benjamin al-Nihāwandī, one of the founders of Karaism, lived. This city was about 60 kilometers from Hamadān, famous for its perfumes, a center of the trade in saffron and in other commodities.

ISPAHĀN, the most important of the cities in Jibāl, was situated at the southeastern corner of the region; the Arabs called it Iṣfahān, or Iṣbahān. It was on the Zā'inda Rūd river, on its northern bank, and was composed of two parts—actually, two cities. In the east there was the city Jay, also called Shahrīstān, or Shahrīstāna (a term generally meaning: the capital), and three kilometers westwards was Yahūdiyya, the city of the Jews. Yahūdiyya was the largest of Jibāl's cities. It was a great commercial center, from where large quantities of textiles, fabrics of the *'attābī* kind were exported, as were various kinds of flax and silk fabrics. Regarding the origins of its Jewish population, there was a tradition similar to what we encountered regarding Neharde'a (above, sec. 289), i.e., that the Judean exiles found there soil and water similar to those of Palestine and decided to settle there; the place is known as *bā naḥmā* (there are corrupted versions), i.e.: we will encamp here (from Hebrew: *pō naḥanē*); its 'current' name was Yahūdiyya. According to Abū Nu'aym, in Persian times Yahūdiyya was called *kū jahūdān*, meaning, "*sikkat* (street of) *al-yahūd*". Its Jews were engaged in dirty jobs, such as blood-letting (or: barbers), tanners, flax shrinkers, and butchers. He also notes that as time went by 15 villages were added to Yahūdiyya, and he lists them. In the views of the early Muslims, Iṣfahān was a large and important concentration of Jews. Muḥammad is credited with the phrase: "the *dajjāl* (the mythological creature which is the final enemy of Islam) will be joined by 70,000 Jews of Iṣfahan, bearing their shawls". The Shiite writer, al-Rāwandī, even defines them more precisely: they will come from the city of Iṣfahān, from a village called Yahūdiyya; the *dajjāl* will be killed on Friday, in the third year, by those who pray for the messiah 'Īsā b. Maryam. A man came to visit Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (one of the heads of ancient Islam). When he heard that the man was from Iṣfahān, he said to him: "you fled from the Jews and the Mājūs (Zoroastrians)". According to him, one refrained from calling Yahūdiyya, Jahūdān (after the Jews), preferring to call it Maymana (bearer of luck); from this we understand that a counterweight was needed against the image of bad luck and tragedy that stuck to the place because of the *dajjāl* story, and because of the name, Yahūdiyya; we will find something similar regarding Balkh (below, sec. 305).

According to Armenian sources, many Jews settled in Iṣfahān in the time of Shābūr II (AD 310-339), they were those whom Shābūr had ordered to be exiled from Armenia when he set about destroying its urban centers. Another tradition ascribes the founding of the city to Yazdigird I (AD 399-427), at the request of his wife, Shūshan Dukht, daughter of the exilarch.

Iṣfahān was the town of Abū ʿĪsā, the leader of the sect named for him (above, sec. 148). In a Karaite commentary to Genesis, it says that the finger of God is what made Iṣfahān the place of origin of language, grammar and excellent commentaries. Qirqisānī, on the other hand, lists the people of Iṣfahān among those who disregard the correct reading of the Bible; when they read it does not sound like Hebrew. Nāṣir Khusraw, who visited Iṣfahān in June 1052, encountered a flourishing, wealthy city, among other things he notes that there were there 200 money-changers (*ṣarrāfān*); we may assume that most, if not all, of them were Jews; he also notes the embroiderers street, the makers of *ṭirāz* (*kū ṭarrāz*), definitely a Jewish occupation. Qazwīnī praises the Jewish artisans of Iṣfahān: they are capable of making pitchers that weigh four *mithqāls*—about 18 grams) that can contain eight *raṭls* of water. This shows that even though they were very light, they had a great intake.

Benjamin of Tudela mentions “Rav Sar Shālōm of Iṣfahān”, “appointed by the exilarch, in charge of all the *rabbānīm* (he means: Rabbanites) in the kingdom of Persia”. According to him there were “about 15,000 Jews there”. In the letters of Samuel b. Eli and the other geonim, published by Assaf, Iṣfahān is not mentioned, which is somewhat striking, but it may have been mentioned in the parts of that collection that were not preserved. There was a messianic movement in Iṣfahān, in 1179, that I have already mentioned (above, sec. 249).²⁹⁸

(299) Regarding the Jewish population in Adharbayjān: we have seen that in MARĀGHA, the capital of the region, lived Samuel b. Judah, who was the apostate Samawāl Ibn ʿAbbās (above, sec. 271). Jews continued to live there through the generations, as shown in manuscripts published by Mann. The same holds for URMĪYA. These two cities were situated on opposite sides of the Urmiya lake, and despite the considerable distance, there was, apparently, a convenient boat connection between them. A sheet from the Geniza with a fragment of a commentary of Saadia Gaon’s on the

²⁹⁸ Hamadān, see Benjamin of Tudela, 53. The gaon’s letter to Hamadān: Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 1 (3.1929/30), 32-35, and see Assaf’s comments *ibid.* in part 1, 122; see Yāqūt, *Buldān* IV, 981-992. See on Hamadān in the talmudic period: Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 140f. Nihāwand, see Le Strange, *Lands*, 196f.; many of the city’s praises are gathered in Schwarz, *Iran*, 497-503. Iṣfahān, the traditions on the exiles: Ibn al-Faqīh, 261f.; Muqaddasī, *Aḡālīm*, 388; Abū Nuʿaym, *Iṣbahān*, I, 15ff.; the *dajjāl*: Ibn ʿAsākir, VII, 310; al-Rāwandī, *Kharāj*, 191f.; al-Qurtubī, *Tadhkirah*, 253 (the *dajjāl* will emerge from the area of Iṣfahān, from a village called al-Yahūdiyya, will ride a sterile ass similar to a mule, with a distance of 40 cubits from ear to ear. See also the tradition about the relationship of the Jews of Iṣfahān with the *dajjāl*, in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *al-Manār*, 155 n. 1, the editor’s note, citing Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*, who ascribes this tradition to Anas b. Mālīk. The comment of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 295; in his continuation he cites detractive passages from poems about the city. See also his entry on Jahūdihān, *ibid.*, II, 168. See also Qazwīnī, ed. Minorsky, 335: Jahūdān is Maymana. See also Himyārī, *Rawḍ*, 43. Jews expelled from Armenia: see Mosè Corenese, *Storia*, 323; cf. Lynch, *Armenia*, II, 8; Lang, *Armenia*, 162. See the traditions on the founding of Iṣfahān and the beginnings of its Jewish population: Fischel, *Starr Mem. Vol.*, 112ff.; on the slaughter of the Jews in Iṣfahān in the days of Firuz (AD 472), I already wrote above, sec. 41. The tradition on Shūshan Dukht: Marquart, *Ērānshahr*, 29. The Karaite commentary to Genesis, MS Firkovich II, no. 4633, see Mann, *Texts*, II, 105; Qirqisānī on the people of Iṣfahān: 135, 140; see Nāṣir Khusraw, 92; Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, II, 197; Benjamin of Tudela, 53f.; cf. on Iṣfahān also Le Strange, *Lands*, 202ff., especially p. 204, with some details on its Jewish part, Yahūdiyya, in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries; cf. Schwarz, *Iran*, 589, 620.

pericope *bō'* (the commentary on *this month*, Exodus 12) has a colophon on one side according to which it was part of a book dedicated to the "Urmiya synagogue"; a certain R. Baruch, of Marāgha, received it from Urmiya, "for they no longer had a congregation which knew how to read it, not even one word in the Hagarite (=Arabic) language"; however, Ephraim b. 'Azariah, who wrote the colophon, took it back from him, for actually "this condition was not valid any more" (that the congregation would read and study it) "but its sanctity had not been canceled", meaning that the book was consecrated to the Urmiya synagogue and had to be left there. We also have information about Jewish communities in KHUWAI, TABRİZ, and SALAMAS; the Jews there (in addition to the Jews of Marāgha and Urmiya), writes Samawāl b. 'Abbās, joined Menaḥem b. Solomon's movement (above, sec. 249).²⁹⁹

(300) Two important cities are mentioned in the Khūzistan area, AHWĀZ and TUSTAR. Khūzistan was the southwestern region of Persia. It was named for Ahwāz, the Arabic name of the city, an abbreviation of *sūq al-Ahwāz*, i.e., the market of the Hūz, or Hūz (Ahwāz is the plural form of Hūz), a tribe that lived in that region in the Persian period and during the Arab conquest; the Aramaic name of the area, Bē Hōzayē, is mentioned in many places in the Babylonian Talmud. Saadia Gaon, in the "Sefer ha-galui", when trying to show that he had the support of the Jewish masses, writes that all the 'heads' (*al-ru'asā'*), who study Torah for its own sake, "from Egypt to Khūzistān", were on his side. In his Torah translation, Elam is Khūzistān. The geonim, Sherira and Hayy, who were passionately against the formula of the *ahāvā rabbā* (great love) in prayer, claiming that *ahavat 'ōlām* (eternal love) should be recited instead, explain: "since *ahāvā rabbā* was never recited in Neharde'a, neither in the morning prayer or the evening prayer, neither in Elam, Persia, or Media". By Elam he meant: Khūzistan.

In the early Muslim period, Ahwāz was the regional capital, a large commercial center and also the region's main port, via the Dujayl ("small Tigris") river upon which it was situated. The city was the main base of the Jewish financiers, Neṭīrā and others, at the end of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth (below sec. 364). In an earlier period, Ahwāz was an important transit station of the Rādhānite merchants—travelling from Kūfa, they would sail on the Euphrates and the canals of Baghdad, from there via the Tigris, to Baṣra, then to Ahwāz, and would then go to the other centers in southern Persia, and further to India and China (below, sec. 347). The Persian name of the city was Hurmshīr, a transmutation of the original, Hurmuzshahr, i.e., the city of Hurmuz; in earlier times, it was called Hurmuz Ardāshīr.

²⁹⁹ See the survey on Marāgha in Schwarz, *Iran*, 1005-1019; on Urmiya, *ibid.*, 1245. See Mann, *Texts*, the index (Marāgha); see the Geniza sheet, TS 8.237, ed. Hirschfeld, *JQR*, 16 (1903/4), 298; cf. Mann, *ibid.*, II, 1464f.; the date of the document is not preserved. See Samawāl b. 'Abbās, *Iḥḥām* (Perlmann), 91; see surveys of Khuway, Salamās, Tabrīz, in: Schwarz, *Iran*, 1055-1074, 1079-1083, 1108-1111; *idem*, 1245, writes: "the Jews were well known in Adharbayjān, but it seems that one did not love them; apparently, the (Muslim) geographers do not mention them at all". Cf. Fischel, *PAAJR*, 22 (1953), 1ff., who adds there a survey of Jewish personalities who became incorporated in the Mongolian system in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries.

Tustar is the Shushtar mentioned in the Talmud; in Persian: Shustar. It was the second most important city in the Khūzistan region. Talmudic tradition extols the city: "As they arrived in Shūsh (i.e., Shūshan), (the people of) Israel said: it is worth like two countries; as they arrived to *ʿalāmīn* (i.e., Elam) they said: (it is worth like) two worlds (*ʿōlāmāyn*); as they arrived to Shūsh *terē* (*terē* = two; a play on the name Shūshtar) they said: (everything there) is doubled". The city was about 100 kilometers north of Ahwāz, as the crow flies, about twice that distance by ship, also on the Dujayl. Along with the name Tustar, we also find: Dustar, which was much more common in regards to the Tustaris, who will be discussed below, and who were called also Dustaris (in Arabic, the plural: Tasātira, also Dasātira). Medieval Arab writers noted this interchange. It may be that the form Dasātira was influenced by the Persian *dastūr* as well, which means law, religious law; it is also the nickname designating a person with a high post. The city was one of the most important centers of the textile industry in the early Muslim period, perhaps the most important. According to Yāqūt, Tustar was especially prominent for its production of garments and headdresses with a broad swath, the *ḫrāz*. In Tustar one used to manufacture the fabric for covering the *kaʿba* in Mecca. The fame of Tustar garments and fabrics is also prominent in the Geniza, in the term *thawb tustarī*, or *dustarī*. The *qāḍī* Abū ʿUmar, when appearing before the vizier ʿAlī Ibn ʿĪsā, wore a *dabīqī shustarī* cloth gown. A *shiqqa* (piece) cost 200 dinars (about 100 average monthly salaries). The Tustarī silk clothes, *dībāj tustarī*, won fame far and wide.

We will not be straying far from the truth when saying that it is the Jews who manufactured these fabrics. Moreover, we have the testimony of Ibn Miskawayh, who says that most of the Tustar merchants were Jews. As to the letter from Ahwāz, printed in my collection, it contains clear evidence about the activity of Jewish merchants in imports and exports of textiles, in Ahwāz. A deed written in the Karaite court in Ahwāz, also from the Cairo Geniza, of AD 951, also testifies to the presence of a Karaite community in this city, the community from which the Tustari family came.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ Bē Hōzayē in the Talmud: Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 70-75. *Sefer ha-galuy*, in Stern, *Melilah*, 5 (1954/5), 140, 144. Sherira and Hayy: in David Abūdrahām, 75; cf. Harkavy, *Had. gam Yesh.*, (reprint), 433. See on Ahwāz: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 410f.; Schwarz, *Iran*, 315-324; Le Strange, *Lands*, 232ff.; Serjeant, *AI*, 10 (1943), 71; and see the entry 'al-Ahwāz' in *El²* (by L. Lockhart); Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, see the index. Shūsh *terē*: BT *Sanhedrīn*, 94a; cf. Oppenheimer, *ibid.*, 433-436. See on Tustar: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 848ff., who *inter alia* notes that the Persian name of the city is Shūshtar. Schwarz, *Iran*, 352-358; Le Strange, *Lands*, 243; the entry 'Shushtar' in *El²* (by J.H. Kramers and C.E. Bosworth); on 'Dastūr': Goitein, *Letters*, 311 n. 25; more on the spelling of the city's name: Samʿānī, *Ansāb* (Haydarabad), V, 346f. and editor's note 8; Jawālīqī, in Derenbourg, *Fleischer Festschr.*, 146; see also the entry 'Dastūr' in Vuller's *Lexicon*. See on the Tustari textiles: Iṣṭakhrī, 92; Canard, *Jaudhar*, 45 n. 10; Hilāl, *Wuzarāʾ* (Amedroz), 327; Tanūkhī (Margoliouth), 29; Thaʿālībī, *Thimār*, 426 (where there is a misprint of the name Tustar); *idem*, *Laṭāʾif*, 174; and see Gil, *Be-malkhūt*, IV, in the index: *thawb tustarī* (*dustarī*); cf. Serjeant, *AI*, 10 (1943), 33f.; see Ibn Miskawayh, *Tajārīb*, I, 257, the year being AD 933. The letter from Ahwāz: 178; Shaked, *Tarbiz*, 41 (1971/2), 51f., where he edited Moseri Ia.1; see there his assumption that the Ahwāz deed first edited by Margoliouth, *JQR*, 11 (1898/9), 671-675, was also a Karaite deed.

(301) The biblical Shushan, i.e., SHÜSH (or: SÜS), is mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela. In Khūzistān (as it should be read) he encounters "the city of Elam", and in its ruins—"the capital Shushan", which is

the palace of King Ahasverus, where in ancient times there was a great building. There are in it about 7,000 Jews, 14 synagogues, with the grave of Daniel, peace be upon him, in front of one of them. The Tigris river (actually: the Shūsh, or Karkhā, river, a tributary of the Dujayl) divides the city and there is a bridge between them. On the side where the Jews live is Daniel's grave, that is where there was great commerce and they became wealthy.

Further down he says that the wealth would only be on the side where Daniel's grave was located; then the people of the other side complained that they were poor, which "led to prolonged wars between them"; eventually, after great suffering, the sides reached a compromise, and they moved the grave from side to side every year. This took place until the days of Sanjār. When he found out about this arrangement, which made a mockery of the Prophet Daniel, he decided to put an end to it, and ordered that his coffin be suspended from the bridge exactly at mid point, within a glass cabinet, and next to it build a house of prayer "for all the people of the world". He forbade fishing on either side of the bridge for a distance of one mile. Petahiah of Regensburg, who was there a few years after Benjamin, found only "two Jewish dyers", "and they showed him Daniel's coffin"; then he presents a story similar to that of Benjamin about Daniel's coffin being moved to the middle of the river. The *niḥāyat al-arab*, a book of an anonymous writer of about the second half of the eighth century AD, says that Daniel was one of the 20,000 Jews exiled to Babylonia, and died in the city of Sūs. He was buried there until his body was found at the time of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Qazwīnī notes that Shūsh is a wealthy city, a commercial center, where fabrics and headdresses of silk, of the type *khazz*, were manufactured; this is where Daniel's coffin was suspended. According to al-Gharnāṭī, Daniel was buried beneath the al-Sūs river, because they used his body while praying for rain; then Abū Mūsā (i.e., al-Ashʿarī, at the time of ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb) ordered that the river tributary be shifted in a way that would cover the grave; above which one placed a marble plate with lead over it, and built a large mosque near it, which is *mashhad dāniyāl*. Al-Himyarī transferred this event to Tustar, and from there one moved Daniel to Sūs, and Abū Mūsā ordered that three graves be built, one of them with Daniel's remains, so that his exact burial place would not be known, and had the waters of the river pass over it, as in the above description.³⁰¹

(302) East of Khūzistān, there was a broad expanse of land known by the name of Fāris, Persia, the Greek Persis; this region gave its name to the entire Persian empire, i.e., what may be called Iran. In the Muslim period, SHIRĀZ was the regional capital, a large, important city, that the Arabs founded towards the end of the seventh century. Benjamin of Tudela found

³⁰¹ See Benjamin of Tudela, 49f.; he might have confused Shūsh with Tustar; Petahiah, 20f.; see *Niḥāyat al-arab*, MS Cambridge Qq 225, 46b; Qazwīnī (Minorsky), 131; Gharnāṭī, 137; Himyarī, *Rawḍ*, 140, and see a slightly different version, *ibid.*, 329; cf. more sources and comments: Scarcia Amoretti, *RSO*, 60 (1988), 207f.; see the entry 'al-Sūs' in *El'* (M. Streck and C.E. Bosworth).

there a relatively large Jewish population, of, according to him, about 10,000 people; we have no more information about its Jews in the geonic period. Sirāf was the region's main port; one of the biggest cities in the caliphate grew around the port, with merchants considered to be the wealthiest of all. Towards the end of the tenth century, a gradual period of decline set in for the city. In AD 899, there was a Jewish governor of the city by the name of Rūzbih (=Yōm Tōv), he is mentioned because of his attempt to blind the Būyid Ṣamṣam al-dawla Abū Kālījār, by the order of the latter's brother, Sharaf al-dawla; this event took place in one of Sirāf's fortresses. A Jewish resident of Sirāf, by the name of Abū'l-Fakhr Ḥunayn al-Sirāfi, is mentioned in the letter of a Fustat resident staying in Baghdad, in the second half of the twelfth century.

The capital of the northern part of the Fāris region, and the official capital of the Sasanid empire, was the city of IṢṬAKHR; it appears that it had a Jewish community, and a record of a local Jewish family that converted to Islam in the time of the Damascus caliph Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, apparently in AD 684 (above, sec. 175) has been preserved. Legendary traditions connect the place with King Solomon, and there is mention of *maʿab sulaymān*, the recreational square of King Solomon, and also a mosque named for him. In the Babylonian Talmud (*Megillā* 13a) it says, in the name of R. Nehemiah, "why is she called Esther? because the gentiles call her so for Istahr"; perhaps Iṣṭakhr is meant.

The southeastern region of Iran, beyond the great desert, was known as Sijistān, and its two important cities were KĀBIL and GHAZNA (=Gazna, Gōzān); they are sometimes listed with the cities of Khurāsān. Kābil had a Jewish quarter located outside of the walls (a *rabḍ*). There is some conjecture that the ancestors of Abū Ḥanīfa, one of the most important Muslim writers in the field of religious law, were Kābil Jews (above, sec. 179, note). Benjamin of Tudela informs us about Ghazna, that it had about 80,000 Jews. Moses Ibn Ezra quotes an anonymous informant, whose information he somewhat doubts, saying that there were 40,000 Jews in Ghazna, listed on the poll tax rolls. We have seen the matter of Isaac of Ghazna, who was in charge of its mines (above, sec. 279).³⁰²

(303) Two other regions, Qūmis and Jurjān, were near Khurāsān proper, and their localities were sometimes counted among those of Khurāsān. The correct name of the city of QŪMIS, the capital of the region for which it was named, was: DĀMGHĀN. We have no information regarding a Jewish community there, except for the names of the Qūmisī family, including Daniel al-Qūmisī, the Karaite thinker and biblical commentator.

The city of JURJĀN, the capital of the region of that name, had two parts, on either side of the Jurjān river. According to Yāqūt, it had a Jewish quarter, called *al-yahūdiyya*, and one of the gates of the city was called *bāb*

³⁰² See Benjamin of Tudela, 54; see on Shīrāz: Le Strange, *Lands*, 249ff.; Sirāf, Le Strange, *ibid.*, 258f. The Jewish governor: Abū Shujāʿ, 149f.; Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āh*, MS Paris, 5866, 119b; cf. Busse, *Chalif*, 158 n. 6, 483. Ḥunayn: 88, line 9; cf. also: Fischel, *Marx Pres. Vol.*, 207; Iṣṭakhr: Le Strange, *ibid.*, 275f.; Schwarz, *Iran*, 13-16; places called after King Solomon: Muqaddasi, *Aqālīm*, 444, cf. the entry Iṣṭakhr in *EL*² (by M. Streck and G.C. Miles). Kābil, see Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ*, 489; cf. also Le Strange, *ibid.*, 349f. Ghazna: Benjamin of Tudela, 54 (see there a version: 8000); Moses Ibn Ezra, 50; cf. Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 39f.

al-yahūd. Al-Bīrūnī mentions the Jew Yaʿqūb b. Mūsā al-Niqrīsī, from whom he received the information about the Jews, in Jurjān.

Khurāsān proper is mentioned in some sources of the period. A number of inscriptions have been found that testify to the ancient existence of a Jewish population in its cities, especially in the city of FIRŪZKŪH and the area of the GHŪR, in the twelfth century.

At the beginning of the eighth century, at around 725, we read of an event regarding a seal stone, a red amethyst, that was in the hands of Ḥamza b. Bayḍ, who received it from Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, the Yazīd who rebelled against the Umayyads and was executed; Ḥamza b. Bayḍ was afraid of selling it in Iraq lest its origins be discovered, thus he sold it to a Jew in Khurāsān for 30,000 dirhams; the Jew later said he would even have paid 50,000.

Hayy Gaon writes of the egregious customs of the Khurāsān Jews, of about the ninth century:

...and in Khūrasān there has been for some years, more than a hundred years, a custom to consecrate the wedding with a ring while sitting at a feast.... and the ruling of our great grandfather Judah Gaon, was that the wedding ceremony should not be performed in a different way from that of Babylonia, that is, by a marriage contract (*ketubbā*), and the signatures of witnesses and the betrothal blessing, etc. (see also sec. 140 above).

Daniel al-Qūmisī, who knew Khurāsān before going to Palestine, mentions the Turkish intrusion, in his commentary to Daniel 11:36-39, noting that they were idol worshippers. There were sectaries among the Khurāsān Jews, and this region was one of the foci of the development of Karaism. Qirqisānī, in writing about issues of the Babylonian tradition of the Bible reading, about which he had reservations, lists Khurāsān among the countries whose Jews read according to this tradition.

Moses Ibn Ezra writes about the Babylonian exiles who spoke Aramaic and Arabic (*bi'l-suryāniyya wa-bi'l-quḍā'iyya*) until Nehemiah forbade it; likewise, about the Samaritan exiles who arrived in the districts of Khurāsān, that is (II Kings 17:6, 18:11, I Chronicles 5:26) around Halah and Habor and Mount Gōzān and the cities of Media, and, according to him, there is no doubt that the districts of Khurāsān are meant.

Going by bits of such information, it is easy to understand that the Jewish population of Khurāsān served, at the end of the ninth century, as fertile ground for the outbreak of the controversy between the Pumbedita yeshiva and ʿUqba, the exilarch—which is described by Nathan the Babylonian (above, secs. 137-140). There is no doubt that the Jewish population in Khurāsān was very influential, as Muqaddasī, writing at the end of the tenth century, says, noting that this region (which includes Khurāsān) had many Jews and few Christians; that struggle for Khurāsān was, therefore, not over a small matter.³⁰³

³⁰³ On Qūmis and Dāmghān see Le Strange, *Lands*, 364f. Jurjān: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 1045; Bīrūnī, *Āthār*, 269f.; Schreiner, *ZAW*, 6 (1886), 247 n. 5; Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 42f.; Zand, *Pe'amim*, 35 (1987/8), 18. Le Strange, *ibid.*, 377f.; on the Khurāsān inscriptions, especially in the area of the Ghūr, see the comments of Fischel, *JACS*, 85 (1965), 150-152, with more references. The story of the amethyst, Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, XV, 18. The customs of Khurāsān: ʿOṣar ha-g. to *Ketubbōt*, 18; to *Qiddūshin*, 133. See Daniel al-Qūmisī, in Mann, *JQR*, NS 12 (1921/2), 519ff.; Qirqisānī, *Anwār*, 135, 140; Moses Ibn Ezra, 48; his

(304) One of the main cities of Khurāsān was NISHĀPŪR; Naysābūr, for the Arabs. Starting from 830, this was the capital of the region, and actually the capital of central and northern Iran, during the rule of ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir. The city was also called Abarshahr ("city of clouds"). Benjamin of Tudela writes, certainly on the basis of hearsay, about "the mountains of Naysābūr, which are on the river Gōzān", "and there are Jewish people there, in the land of Persia". Further on, he tells us that residing there are tribes of Dan, Zebulon, Asher and Naphtali of the Assyrian exile, and their leader is "a *nāsī*... whose name is R. Joseph Amarkelā ha-Levi"; his report implies that this was an agricultural population, and that there was military cooperation between them and the Huns (*kufr al-turk*). This information contains a kernel of truth, especially regarding the relations with the Hun tribes, but not about the origin from the ten tribes. It is not clear whether Benjamin means the city of Nishāpūr, or the whole huge area of Khurāsān and the other parts of northeastern Persia. About AD 1000, al-Hākim al-Naysābūrī writes about two villages whose population was Jewish, that were annexed to the city of Naysābūr (without citing the time). Some hundred years later, al-Fārisī mentions Jewish figures who lived in Nishāpūr (above, sec. 184). Towards the end of the eleventh century, about 1080, we find Isaac b. Simḥa al-Naysābūrī, staying in Alexandria, and in my collection I include three letters of his that were preserved in the Geniza, that deal with commercial matters and sea transport; in one of them there is a description of a disaster at sea; this Isaac was sailing on the ship that sank. It is clear that the man had emigrated from Khurāsān and settled in Alexandria (or perhaps his father, Simḥa, was the one who had emigrated).

MARW was also one of the important cities in Khurāsān; it flourished especially in the twelfth century, during Saljūq rule. Above (sec. 166), I already mentioned the Jewish governor, ʿAqīva, who governed the city in the first half of the eighth century, under the Umayyads. Bayhaqī presents a tradition according to which Ezra the Scribe came to Khurāsān, bringing with him earth from Palestine that he received from Jeremiah, in order to look for similar earth in the exile, and he eventually found such earth in Marw; there he built the *shahristān* (a large city, distinct from the *kuhandiz*, an old fortress, and from the *rabaḍ*, the unwallled area outside the fortress) with a synagogue that was still standing in the writer's time, during the rule of the Saljūq Arslān Arghūn (1092-1096). According to Yāqūt, Ezra used to pray there, and the city's founder, according to him, was Dhū'l-Qarnayn, i.e., Alexander the Great. He also says that Ezra's grave was in Marw. In northern Khurāsān, about 150 kilometers east of Marw, was the city of ABĪWARD (or Bāward). In a deed of attorney written in Fustat, in 1024,

geographical comments are not exact; so also Judah b. Bil'am in his commentary to Jes. 7:25, who writes on the exile of the tribes of Israel "in Khurāsān, in Halah and Habor and the Gozan river", and goes on with details, namely that Habor is a river in Khurāsān, named 'al-Khabūr'; and the Gozan river is "close to the city of Ghazna"; see it in Derenbourg, *REJ*, 18 (1889), 74; many Jews in Khurāsān: Muqaddasī, *Aḡālīm*, 323; on the Jews of Khurāsān see also: Neubauer, *JQR*, 1 (1888/9), 186; Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 471; Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 31-35; Bosworth, *Sistān*, 9f.; Daniel, *Polit. and Social Hist.*, 13 (and see his comments on the changes in the definitions of Khurāsān's borders). Zand, *Pe'amim*, 35 (1987/8), 9ff.

Mudallala, the daughter of Wabhān, asks that a representative be appointed for her who would travel to Palestine to secure her writ of divorce and what was coming to her on the basis of the *ketubbā*, as well as alimony, from her husband, Šedāqā b. Eli who had been in Ramla for over a year; Šedāqā was known by the name of al-Bāwardī and also al-Dimashqī; i.e., he was a Jew who left his place of origin (it may have been his father, Eli, who had left), Abīward, in Khurāsān, first went to Damascus and lived there, then went to Fustat, where he married, then abandoned his wife and settled in Ramla. The Jewish community in Abīward is also mentioned in the story of Fuḍayl b. ʿIyād, a robber who gave a Jew back what he had robbed from him, and caused the Jew to convert to Islam, at about AD 800 (in Hārūn al-Rashīd's time).³⁰⁴

(305) The GHÜR is a huge mountainous area spreading from the city of Harāt eastwards; a semi legendary tradition tells of the beginning of the Jewish settlement there, at about AD 800, in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, when the *amīr* Banjī b. Naharān, the area's ruler, acceded to the request of his Jewish friend and advisor, even granting him a written commitment that he would allow the Jews to settle there. In 1946, Dupont-Sommer published a Hebrew inscription, set in stone, found in the city of Ghūr, and moved to the Kābil museum. The inscription's text:

He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness (Isaiah 57:2), amen; the burial of ʿAdanī, my beloved, upright and pious fearing brother, the elder Elisha b. Moses Joseph on the date of the Sabbath day 24 Tishri in the year *lamed, kaf, yōd*, may his resting place be under the tree of life, as written in the Bible.

Afterwards, more than 20 additional Judeo-Persian and Hebrew inscriptions and fragments of inscriptions were discovered in the area—most of them from the twelfth century.

I have already mentioned BALKH in regards to Hīwī, who resided there (above, secs. 193-195). The name of one of its gates is testimony to the large Jewish population: *bāb al-yahūd*, west of Balkh. At about midway between it and Marw, was the city of Yahūdiyya, which, as its name shows, was founded by Jews and its population was mainly Jewish; yet, similar to what we found regarding Iṣfahān (above, sec. 298), the Muslims were not enamored over the name of the city, and crowned it with the name of Maymana (the city "that should have luck"). Its ancient Persian name was Jahūdān, a cognate of the Arabic Yahūdiyya. It was an important city, the capital of the district of Jūzjānān. Besides Jahūdān (or Yahūdiyya), there was also a quarter of the city of Balkh, named Jahūdanak, i.e., little Yahūdiyya.

³⁰⁴ Nīshāpūr, the capital of the region: Bosworth, *Cambr. Hist. of Iran*, IV, 95f.; see Le Strange, *Lands*, 381-387; Benjamin of Tudela, 54; villages annexed to Nīshāpūr: al-Hākīm al-Naysābūrī, 58b. Isaac b. Simḥa al-Naysābūrī: 739-741. On Marw, see a fragment from a Persian manuscript of Bayhaqī, in Schaeder, *Esra*, 38; see the entry Arslan-Arghūn in *El*² (by C. Cahen); Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 507, 745. Cf. Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7(1945), 35-37; Zand, *Pe'amim*, 35 (1987/8), 17. Šedāqā b. Eli, see Gil, *Palest.*, II, 581f. (no. 318), and see *idem*, *Hist.*, 617 n. 96. The story of the robber: al-ʿAṭṭār, *Tadhkira*, I, 76f., and see also Ibn Khallikān, IV, 47 (no. 531); cf. Zand, *ibid.*, 11.

ZARŪBĀN, should also be mentioned, where there were Jews who looked for gold, about whom it was said that they once found a natural gold ingot about ten cubits (about six meters) long.³⁰⁵

(306) In the Khawārizm region, that was a separate kingdom at the time of the Arab conquest, there was apparently an ancient Jewish center. Evidence of such is found, apparently, in Ṭabarī, who cites the contract (*ṣulḥ*) drawn up between the Muslim commander and the king of Khawārizm, and relates that during the negotiations, the king assembled *mulūkahu wa-aḥbarahu wa-dahāqīnahu*, his kings, and (Jewish) scholars, and knights; thus between "his kings" and "his knights", there was the term, "his *aḥbār*"; *aḥbār* is the plural of *ḥabr*, i.e., a Jewish scholar, which is the meaning of this word, a Hebrew loan word in Arabic. In this period we have information about a Hebrew-Persian dictionary, compiled by Solomon b. Samuel, of GURGANG; for the Arabs it was Urjanj, or Jur-jāniyya, the Khawārizm capital. As to BUKHĀRĀ, we have no knowledge of a Jewish population, in the geonic period, except for the information about the Persian *ṣūfī*, Abū Karam al-Dārānī, who claimed that he was the *mahdī*, who planned to destroy Jews and Christians in Bukhārā, and loot their property, in AH 637, AD 1239/40; he even carried out his plan (not mentioned is the degree in which he did). SAMARQAND is mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela: Samarqant, relating that about 50,000 Jews were there, "it is a large city at the edge of Persia, and R. Obadiah the *nāsī* was in charge of them and they had great scholars and wealthy people". In the early 1060s, a certain Abū 'Imrān Moses (Mūsā) b. Ḥalfōn (Khalaf) al-Samarqandī is mentioned in letters of merchants of Nehorai b. Nissim's circle. He was the brother-in-law of Khallūf b. Mūsā the goldsmith, who lived in Palermo, and had received a power of attorney to sue for what was owed to Khallūf by Isaiah b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, as stated in a memorandum preserved in the Geniza. Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī mentions that he read a letter of al-Samarqandī. Mūsā b. Ḥalfōn transported a shipment of 20 pre-shrunk dresses, five coats, four Sicilian headdresses and raw fabrics for Farah b. Joseph of Alexandria. A man from Tripoli in Libya writes that Mūsā also dealt with shipments of flax.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ Jews in the Ghūr: according to *ṭabaqāt nāṣirī* of al-Juzjānī (ca. 1260), cited by Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 40f., and see his article in *JAOS*, 85 (1965), 148ff. See the inscription as edited by Dupont-Sommer, AIBL, *Comptes rendus*, 1946, 252ff., and see there its drawing, on p. 253; see also Stern, *JA*, NS 237 (1949), 47ff., and also Fischel in *JA*, *ibid.*, 299f. The first edition was mostly incorrect, and it is Stern who suggested a more acceptable reading, after identifying some Persian words in it. It is impossible to make out what the real purpose of the writer was; Fischel deciphered what probably was the year of the inscription, perhaps 1510 Sel., so the date of death would be 29 September 1198, which was indeed a Saturday. See details on the inscriptions in Fischel, *JAOS*, 85 (1965), 150ff. *Bāb al-yahūd* in Balkh, see: Iṣṭakhrī, 278. Yahūdiyya: Muqaddasī, *Āqālīm*, 298; Qazwīnī in Minorsky, 5, 107, 335; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 167f.; cf. Le Strange, *Lands*, 424; Schwarz, *Pavry Pres. Vol.*, 437f.; Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 37f. (Fischel assumed that Yahūdiyya was the name of the area around Balkh, which is not correct). Zarūbān, see: Bīrūnī, *Jamāhir*, 238; Ibn al-Akfānī, 106 (and see the editor's version: Zarūbān, not Zaruwān as printed in Bīrūnī, *ibid.*). Persian *zār* means gold (see also below, sec. 355, on Jews dealing in gold).

³⁰⁶ See the discussion on the evidence in Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1237, in Zand, *Pe'amim*, 35 (1987/8), 9. The Persian-Hebrew dictionary: Bacher, *Hebr.-pers. Wb.*, in the introduction, 9-17; cf. Fischel, *Hist. Jud.* 7 (1945), 42f. and the entry Bukhara (VII), Bukharan Jews, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, IV (by M. Zand), with details about more localities in Central Asia,

and Transoxanian regions. See on Bukhārā: al-Fuwaṭī, *Ḥawādith*, 121, cf. Fischel, *ibid.*, 43 (who does not indicate any reference). Samarqand: Benjamin of Tudela, 54. The memorandum: 319; Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī: 373, a, line 4; shipment of dresses: 517, a, ll. 15f.; the shipments of flax: 669, b, line 36.

PART THREE

SICILY AND ITS JEWS, 827-1072, IN THE LIGHT OF THE GENIZA
DOCUMENTS AND PARALLEL SOURCES

CHAPTER ONE

MUSLIM RULE IN SICILY

(307) As we know, the Geniza documents date starting from the late tenth century AD. Understandably, then, the information supplied by them is limited to the latter period of Muslim rule over the island. Admittedly, the relatively plentiful information on Sicily's economy also applies to earlier generations. Yet, concerning the political and military events of earlier periods, the Geniza letters do not supply the direct, authentic information, which is otherwise typical of them. Most of these letters belong to the last generation of Muslim rule, from the year 1050 and thereafter. Letters written by merchants in the first half of the eleventh century reflect but little of the situation in Sicily. The Ibn 'Awkal family and their relatives and acquaintances, who are the principal suppliers of letters and information contained in the Geniza documents from the beginning of that century, did not—as we know—conduct much trade with Sicily, by contrast with Nehorai b. Nissim and the other merchants of the second half of the century.

Unfortunately, even the other sources—both Muslim and Christian—contain only scanty and discontinuous information on the events in Sicily. The most important trove of information is provided by Ibn al-Athīr, who apparently took it from an earlier source. The same source apparently also inspired Abū'l-Fidā', al-Nuwayrī, and Ibn Khaldūn, as, although their writings furnish a few small additional details, most of the information contained therein is entirely similar to that which may be found in Ibn al-Athīr.

Following the Muslim takeover of North Africa, and especially of the area of Tunis, known as Ifrīqiya, it became obvious that, sooner or later, the Muslims would also launch raids against the island and attempt to conquer it, as the distance between Sicily and the northern extreme of Africa is quite small. The first important information at our disposal in this connection relates to the year 212 (which began on 2 April 827; the naval campaign discussed below took place in the summer of that year). At that time, Zīyādāt Allāh, ruler of Ifrīqiya (of the Aghlabids), organized a naval campaign against the island, commanded by Asad b. al-Furāt, the *qāḍī* of Qayrawān. Ibn al-Athīr describes this as having been done at the request of the Byzantine naval commander, Fīmī; the latter's name, properly written, appears to have been Euthymius (the 'th' having been pronounced as 'f' in late Greek), and not 'Euphemius' as is commonly supposed. The governor of the island on behalf of Emperor Michael (the Stammerer: 820-829) was a Byzantine noble (*birīq*) called Constantine (and referred to by al-Nuwayrī as Sūda), who had been appointed a year before, in 826. It was Constantine who appointed the abovementioned Euthymius as commander of the navy; the latter conducted raids on Ifrīqiya, against the policy of the Emperor, which called for peace with the Muslims. The Emperor was about

to dismiss him from his post and punish him, when Euthymius took over Syracuse, fought with the island's governor, Constantine, and defeated him near Catania. At that point, the Emperor sent in reinforcements, commanded by an officer whom Ibn al-Athīr calls Balāṭa (Amari: Palata; he may have held the title of *palatinus* or *curopalatus*), cousin of the governor of Palermo, Michael. The two of them conquered Syracuse, and Euthymius was forced to flee to Ifrīqiya where he sought the assistance of Ziyādat Allāh. Ground and naval forces were therefore dispatched from Ifrīqiya to Sicily on 15 Rabi' I, or 14 June. They landed at the southwestern end of the island, at Māzar, and vanquished Balāṭa (apparently somewhere on the southern coast, as Balāṭa's base was in Syracuse, at the southern end of the eastern coast). Balāṭa escaped to Calabria, where he died in uncertain circumstances. The Muslims then conquered several citadels and laid siege to the citadel of Qal'at al-Kārath (Amari: Acri), but refrained from actually conquering it after being promised a tribute (*jizya*). Following the arrival of another army from Ifrīqiya, Asad b. al-Furāt turned his efforts to attacking Syracuse, on the east coast of the island, and Palermo to the north, and laid siege to both those cities. Unfortunately for him, an epidemic broke out in the Muslim army in 828. This, as well as the arrival of Byzantine reinforcements, led the Muslims to a decision to abandon the island; indeed they went so far as to board their ships, but the Byzantines blocked the ships from leaving harbour—giving the Muslims no choice but to burn their ships and rejoin the fight. They conquered the citadel of Mīnaw (Amari: Mineo) and that of Jirjint (which is Girgenti or Agrigento), as well as that of Qaşr Yāna (Castrogiovanni). The tide then turned against them, and for a time they were themselves under siege—until rescued by 300 ships full of troops sent from both Spain and Ifrīqiya. In Rajab 216, August 831, the Muslims succeeded in taking Palermo, and went on from there to assume control of other parts of the island, notably Qaşr Yāna. This initial campaign, which, as we have seen, lasted four years, opened the way for a protracted struggle to conquer the rest of the island. According to the scanty information available to us in the framework of descriptions of campaigns and raids, it appears that some parts of the island, especially to the east, remained under Byzantine rule for many years, in the ninth and even the tenth century.³⁰⁷

(308) Following the conquest of Palermo, the ruler of Ifrīqiya, Ziyādat Allāh b. Ibrāhīm (817-838), appointed his cousin, Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. al-Aghlab, as governor and commander of the Muslim army in Sicily.

The Muslims later went on to attack Ṭabarmīn (Taormina), and fierce battles were waged in other parts of the island as well, especially in the year 223 (838). Nine years later, in 232 (846/7), we read of a severe battle which took place at Lantīnī (Lentini), where the Muslim army fought against both the Byzantine army and the local pro-Byzantine Christian population.

³⁰⁷ See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VI, 333-338; Nuwayrī, 354, 356, 370; Amari, *Storia*, I, 345, 356, 370, 400, 423ff. Nuwayrī gives the date of the conquest of Palermo as Rajab 220, July 835. The information given by Rizzitano, *Bull. of the Fac. of Arts*, Cairo Univ., 28 (1956), 147, based on Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ*, 102, according to which Palermo was conquered in 287, i.e. 900, is incorrect. Regarding the name *Balāṭa* (Palata?), see Amari, *Storia*, I, 367, n. 1. Some of the sources on the first conquests were also copied by Yāqūt, III, 407. Castrogiovanni is sometimes called Qaşr Yāna and sometimes simply Yāna; see Ibn 'Idhārī (ed. Dozy), 105.

Muḥammad b. °Abdallah ruled the island for 19 years, until his death in Rajab 236 (January 851). He was succeeded by al-°Abbās b. Faḍl b. Ya°qūb ibn Fazāra, who was brought to power by the local Muslims (one generation after the beginning of the invasion of Sicily), and whose appointment was confirmed by the ruler of Ifrīqiya, Muḥammad b. al-Aghlab. The war continued into al-°Abbās' time; it was al-°Abbās who staged raids on Christian settlements and centers—including Catania, Syracuse, Nūṭas (Noto), Raghūs (Ragusa), Buthīra (Butera)—in the year following his appointment, 852/3. Qaṣr Yāna was conquered in 244, and Nuwayrī gives the exact date, corresponding to 24 January 858; this achievement was made possible by the betrayal of one of the city notables who was captured by the Muslims and preferred to betray his people and direct the enemy troops, rather than being himself put to death. Ibn al-Athīr stresses the importance of the place (the residence of their 'king').

In 261 (875), the Aghlabid Ibrahīm (II) b. Aḥmad rose to power. He landed in Sicily with a large army, took Yartīnū' (Nardo) on 17 May 875, and launched raids against Mīqish (?); Dimunish (Val Demone), deserted by its population; Ramṭa (Rametta), al-Yaj (?), Kasanta (?).

The above clearly indicates that, throughout that entire period, and in fact throughout the ninth century, large portions of the island were still in Byzantine hands: Catania, Syracuse, Noto, Ragusa, Butera, Taormina, Rametta. On 14 Ramaḍān 265 (10 May 879), the ruler's uncle, Ja°far b. Muḥammad, conquered Syracuse, but was forced to abandon it when a large contingent of Byzantine reinforcements arrived from Constantinople; the retreating Muslims destroyed the city. A short time afterward, in 266 (880), the Muslim fleet suffered a grievous defeat off the coast of Sicily. Nevertheless, the raids on towns held by the Byzantines continued for years afterward—as did the counterattacks by the latter. In 271 (884/5), the *amīr* of Sicily, al-Husayn b. Aḥmad, died and was succeeded by Sawāda b. Muḥammad ibn Khafāja al-Tamīmī, who attacked Catania and Taormina. The subsequently concluded agreement for a three months' truce specified (inter alia) the release of 300 Muslim prisoners. Combat was renewed in 272 (885/6) and continued until the end of the ninth century.³⁰⁸

(309) The Maghribi rulers of the Aghlabid dynasty began to be more intensely involved in Sicilian affairs in 287 (900). Seeing that the governor of the island, Abū Mālik Aḥmad b. °Umar b. °Abdallah, did not succeed in managing the island and the war in an effective manner, the Aghlabid ruler of the Maghrib, Ibrahīm b. Aḥmad, sent his son Abū'l-°Abbās °Abdallah to take over control of the island. He arrived in Sicily on 1 Sha°bān 287 (1 August 900), accompanied by 120 ordinary ships and 40 *ḥarbī* (warships). Prior to his arrival, a severe dispute had broken out between the Muslims of

³⁰⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, VI, 338; VII, 6-7, 60, 62-64, 106, 109, 249, 284, 286, 320, 334, 361, 370, 398, 417, 421. For Buthīra, see Pace, *De Stefano Pres. Vol.*, 369. The locality is mentioned in Greek documents: Bouthera, Boutyra. See Nuwayrī, 362, 364; cf. Amari, *Storia*, I, 451ff., 455f., 471, 481, 488, 490f., 561f. See also Privitera, *Storia*, I, 590ff. One famous native of Castrogiovanni was Elia. Born sometime between 820 and 830—that is, before the Muslim conquest—he was captured during the conquest of the area (after his family had fled from Qaṣr Yāna itself) and bought by a Christian from North Africa. His life was marked by wandering and disaster, yet he was also extremely devout and made a distinct impression on believers everywhere throughout his travels—which included a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. See especially: Gay, *L'Italie mérid.*, 255-260; Gil, *Hist.*, 461, 484.

the island, who were then busy fighting the men of Girgenti, and the new governor, who was then apparently interested in maintaining a state of peace on the island. The Muslims of the island at first apologized for having launched the raid and promised to accept the sovereignty of their new governor; at the same time, Abū'l-[°]Abbās was approached by a delegation from Girgenti, who had come to complain about the raid, while he was on his way to the island and meanwhile concerned with the siege on the citadel of Tripoli in Libya. Relations between the factions continued to deteriorate, and a fleet of 30 warships set out toward Abū'l-[°]Abbās from Palermo. Most of those ships sank in mid-Sha[°]bān (about 15 August 900); nevertheless, an army from Palermo managed to organize near the citadel of Tripoli. The battles continued until the last days of August and concluded with the defeat of the Palermo faction, which retreated to the island. On 10 Ramaḍān (8 September), another battle took place, this time on the island itself, and the Muslims of the island were again vanquished. Abū'l-[°]Abbās took control of the scattered unfortified neighbourhoods of Palermo (the *arbād*). The city was looted, and many fled to Taormina, on the other—eastern—end of the island, as well as to other Byzantine strongholds; some even ran as far as Constantinople itself. Abū'l-[°]Abbās established order in Palermo; he captured a group of the city's notables and dispatched them to his father in Qayrawān. In the spring of 901, he sent the naval and ground forces at his disposal to attack Messina, Catania and Taormina; his fleet attacked Demone, and later besieged and conquered Riyū (Reggio) in Calabria. In the course of that conquest, he took many spoils, especially at Messina, where he looted 30 Byzantine ships. In 289 (902) according to Ibn al-Athīr, Abū'l-[°]Abbās returned to Ifrīqiya; his father, Ibrahīm b. Aḥmad, replaced him in Sicily and took over control of the island, where he died the same year of an intestinal disease. The Fatimid *qāḍī*, al-Nu[°]mān, mentions in his book that Ibrahīm b. Muḥammad started his journey to Sicily in Rajab 289, June 902; Taormina was conquered on 23 Sha[°]bān, 2 August; Ibrahīm died on 10 Dhū'l-qa[°]da, 16 October.

A few years later, the great revolution took place in the Maghrib, bringing the Fatimids to power in Ifrīqiya. On 10 Dhū'l-hijja 297 (20 August 910), the new governor of Sicily, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad b. [°]Alī b. Kulayb, known as Ibn Abī Khinzīr—who had been appointed a short time previously by the Fatimid caliph al-Mahdī—landed at Māzar. A new *qāḍī*, Iṣḥāq b. al-Munhāl, was also appointed for the island. Al-Ḥasan did not last long in office; he did manage to stage one raid against Demone, but an uprising soon broke out against him, and the men of the island had him imprisoned. That uprising, led by a certain Ibn Wahb, was actually a revolt against al-Mahdī and the Fatimid rule. The revolt was suppressed, and Ibn Wahb was taken to Qayrawān and executed. After his execution, the Muslims of the island apologized to al-Mahdī, who pardoned them and sent another governor for Sicily; the new leader, [°]Alī b. [°]Umar al-Balawī, reached the island at the end of Dhū'l-hijja 299 (17 August 912). The local population, however, did not approve of this appointment, as the man was too old. They therefore revolted against their new governor, appointing in his place Aḥmad b. Qurhub, who incited them to launch a raid on Calabria. He and his son [°]Alī took action against the Byzantines in several places. In 300 (apparently in the summer of 913), Aḥmad harried Taormina for half a year, but failed to

conquer it and caused his own army to rise up against him and nearly put him to death. In the end, however, he managed to stay in office, perhaps because of the overt resistance to the Fatimids which he began to display at the time. His most fervent supporters—the ones, in fact, who saved him from death—were the Bedouin in the Muslim army. He then sent out an appeal to all the Muslims on the island, calling on them to revolt against the Fatimids and to recognize the Caliph of Baghdad, al-Muqtadir. This idea appears to have gained vast popularity in Sicily. This atmosphere is apparently reflected in a rhyme written by the linguist Abū ‘Alī al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī ibn Rashīq, stating that Palermo (*Siqilliyya*) is the sister of ‘Adīna. Amari did not understand the meaning of this rhyme, inferring that the reference was to Athens, or to an ‘Adīna which is in Yemen (according to Yāqūt). The name ‘Adīna’, however, is a reference to Baghdad, as we know from Jewish sources.

The inflamed population of Palermo then organized a fleet and sent it to attack the coasts of Ifrīqiya. There they encountered the Fatimid fleet, commanded by al-Ḥasan b. Abī Khinzīr—the same al-Ḥasan who had been the first Fatimid governor of Sicily, as stated above. The Fatimid fleet was roundly defeated; its boats were burned and al-Ḥasan was killed—and the victorious Muslims of Palermo brought his head back to Aḥmad b. Qurhub in triumph. The Sicilians then destroyed the city of Safāḡus (Sfax) and raided Calabria. Eventually, though, Ibn Qurhub’s fleet was bested off the coasts of Ifrīqiya. The men of Palermo finally became disgusted with him. In July 916 (which, according to Amari, is the correct date), they locked him and his retinue up and sent them to al-Mahdī, who ordered that they all be slaughtered on the grave of Ibn Abī Khinzīr.

The new governor appointed by the Fatimids, Abū Sa‘īd Mūsā b. Aḥmad, headed a Fatimid army made up of Berbers from the Banū Kitāma. Battles against the local insurgents took place at the time, mainly in the area of Ṭarabanish (Trapani) and Girgenti; the insurgents suffered heavy losses in about 920. Several years later, in approximately 925, there seems to have been a Byzantine attack against the Muslims of Sicily, with battles waged against them by the island’s governor, Sālim b. Rāshid. Al-Mahdī dispatched reinforcements to the island, and the Muslims set out from Sicily to attack Italy, especially Calabria. They were forced to return to the island because of an epidemic which had broken out among their ranks; on the island itself, however, the fighting continued.

At the same time, anti-Fatimid unrest continued in Sicily. We read of an especially severe outburst in 325 (that year started on 19 November 936), when the Muslims of Girgenti revolted against Sālim b. Rāshid; the latter suppressed the revolt after a fierce battle in Sha‘bān 325 (June-July 937). However, several months later—in Dhū’l-qa‘da (October) of the same year—the men of Palermo revolted against him. Sālim appealed to Qayrawān for help, and Caliph al-Qā‘im sent him an army headed by Khalīl Ibn Ishāq. The rebels of Girgenti and Palermo attempted to gain Khalīl’s support in their struggle against Sālim, but without success. At about the same time, the Fatimids began to construct a new port in Palermo and destroyed part of the city in order to build the port, which was named al-Khālīṣa and developed into a city—or at least a separate neighbourhood—in its own

right. This act should be understood in light of the Fatimids' fixed policy in the Maghrib, of fostering and encouraging commercial trade.

Throughout that period, the renewed uprising in Girgenti continued. Khalīl turned against the rebels, and the city was placed under siege in Jumādā I 326 (March 938). The siege lasted for eight months, but Khalīl was forced to lift it when winter came and to retreat with his army to al-Khālīṣa. The anti-Fatimid resistance reached its zenith in the year 327 (which began on 29 October 938), when a general revolt broke out throughout the armed forces and the citadels, in Palermo, Māzar, Girgenti, and all portions of the island held by the Muslims. So great was their hatred of the Fatimids, that the Muslims in Sicily wrote a letter to Emperor Romanus (Lecapenus) in Constantinople and begged him to come to their aid.

This letter from the anti-Fatimid rebels to the Emperor is also mentioned in a letter preserved in the Geniza, written by the Jewish congregation of Palermo to "our *nāsī*, our king and son of our king" (meaning: King David). The reference is apparently to the exilarch, based in Baghdad, who at that time was the offspring of David b. Zakkai, namely either his son, Judah, or his grandson, Hezekiah b. Judah. These flowery titles, *nāsī*, 'king', were in that period used exclusively for the exilarch. The relatively early date of the letter (940 or slightly thereafter) can be deduced from the name of the city cited by the writer, who refers to himself as "the smallest of the sons of salvation remaining in the remnant of the congregation of the city of Palorm, called *ṣiqilliyya*" ('Palorm' being a form still close to the old name of the city, Panormus). The letter includes descriptions of severe vicissitudes which had befallen the city and its Jews.

The rest of those fallen to the sword and pestilence and famine... we have remained few of many... the number of our widows increased enormously. Nevertheless: Our hearts are warm within us because a remnant of us has survived. (In the remaining fragments of the letter, one can still read:) ...And he slashed at them and killed them in their fat; he besieged the city for many days... and the famine mounted in the city and many thousands starved to death. (Concerning the rebels:) And nevertheless the uprisers did not subside again; lowly and mighty conferred as one, and they sent (a message) to *the king of the great town called the city of Quṣṭanṭīniyya* (Constantinople), and they asked him to [come to] *their aid with his legions*, under the terms of his choice; and he answered them from his palaces, and he enlisted his columns, and he set out on campaign after campaign, until he came to the mouth of the opening (that is, the Strait of Messina), and he passed through the passage without anyone hindering him, and he captured the fortified and settled city... And *the Gīrgashite*... set out against him... and *the commander of the king of Edom* set out against him and smote... and he knocked down all his camp...

Due to the missing portions of the letter, we cannot be certain whom the writer eventually defined as the winner. Additional details on the revolt and the battles may be found in Ibn al-Athīr. Khalīl, the commander of the Fatimid forces, requested additional assistance from Caliph al-Qā'im, who indeed sent him a large army from Qayrawān. He besieged citadels held by Byzantine forces and conquered Qal'at (=the citadel of) Abū Thawr (Amari: Caltavulturo, near Māzar) and Qal'at al-Ballūṭ (Caltabellotta, in the Sciacca area). He also besieged Qal'at Ablāṭanū (Platani) until the end of

327 (October 939); forced to give up the latter, he then attacked and besieged Girgenti, placing Abū Khalaf b. Hārūn in command of the siege. The siege of Girgenti lasted another two years, until 329 (941); many of the people of Girgenti managed to escape to the Byzantines, and those remaining pleaded for *amān*, which was promised to them provided that they leave the citadel. Khalīl, however, broke the *amān* and threw them into prison in Palermo; moreover, he had their notables loaded into a ship and arranged to have them all drowned. This appears to have been the end of the revolt, and Sālim, the governor of the island, returned to Ifrīqiya in Dhū'l-ḥijja 329 (September 941). Although Ibn al-Athīr did not bother to write it explicitly, the Byzantine army dispatched by the Emperor seems to have failed in its mission, giving the victory to the Fatimids (referred to in the Geniza letter as *ha-girgāshī*, 'the Girgashite').³⁰⁹

(310) Shortly after his ascension to the caliphate, al-Manṣūr appointed a new governor for Sicily: Abū'l-Ghanā'im al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī'l-Ḥasan

³⁰⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, VII, 505, 520; VIII, 49, 53, 71, 159; 337f.; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, IV, 94f.; Amari, *Storia*, I, 562; II, 82ff., 86ff., 166ff., 182ff., 224ff.; Rizzitano, *Bull. of the Fac. of Arts*, 153f. See also the entry Kalbids (by Rizzitano) in *IEJ*. The information regarding Tripoli is unclear. Amari, *Storia*, II, 99, n. 1, believes the correct version to be that given by Ibn Khaldūn: Ṭarābana (or Ṭarābanish, i.e. Trapani, some 100 kms. west of Palermo, also on the northern coast of the island). Yet, in the same work, II, 497, he supposed that a town called Tripoli had existed somewhere in Sicily; this town, though, is not mentioned in any source at all. According to Ibn al-Athīr's description, it seems to me that my own interpretation—that the Sicilians attempted to attack the Aghlabid expeditionary force while it was still on the Maḡrib coasts—is more reasonable; still, the information on the alleged siege of Tripoli might, in fact, be a distortion. See Nu'mān (the *qāḍī*), *Iftitāḥ*, 77, 316; according to him, it was the son of al-Mahdī, al-Qā'im, who defeated Ibn Qurhub. ʿAdīna: see Amari, *Bibl.*, 212. The poet's statement is included in a *diwān* of Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Abī'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Miṣrī al-Tawzarī, which Amari reproduces in his work. Concerning the author, Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Rashīq al-Azdī al-Qayrawānī, see Amari, *Storia*, II, 562f. He was born in the year 1000 in Masīla in Ifrīqiya, and was in the service of al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs. In 1051, when the Bedouin laid siege to Qayrawān, he escaped to Māzar in Sicily, where he died in 1064 (some say in 1070). Cf. Brockelmann, *GAL*, G. I, 307; S. I, 539f. The Geniza letter is TS NS 149.1, edited by Scheiber and Malachi, *PAAJR*, 41-42 (1973/4), 207ff.; by Zeldes, *Zion*, 53 (1988), 58-60; and re-edited in Ben-Sasson, *Siṣīliya*, no. 3. We cannot know for certain whether the version in the Geniza is the original or a copy. The quire form (folded sheet) in which it was preserved supposedly indicates that it is a copy. Were it an original document (from about 940!), it could be considered one of the oldest letters in the Geniza. Scheiber and Malachi read, in the beginning of the letter (line 2): *ben aspāmiya* (son of Spain), and therefore believed (p. 208) that the letter was addressed to Ḥisdai ibn Shaprūt, and assumed that it dated from 956 (the campaign of ʿAmmār ibn al-Ḥusayn, described below). But the true reading is *mi-shemāyā* (from Heaven), which apparently should be completed to read *nāṭerōhī mi-shemāyā* (may he be guarded by Heaven) or some other such blessing; this fits the text of line 3. Zeldes (p. 58, n. 6) and Ben-Sasson were both of the opinion that the text reads *ben shemāyā* (son of Heaven); this is obviously an impossible reading. There were others who sought to prove that the letter allegedly belongs to the eleventh century. The place before the word *ha-girgāshī* is torn and some word is missing; it is impossible to know whether the word written there was *melekh* (king), or *sar ṣāwā* (military commander—as suggested by Zeldes), or any other conceivable word. The 'Girgashite' of the Bible has been interpreted in the Palestinian Talmud (*Shev'it* vi, 36c: 'the Girgashite left the place, believing in God's [words], and went away to Afīqī'); in the *midrashim*, and by early Christian writers, as a people exiled to Africa; see the sources compiled by Monceaux, *REJ*, 44:1, 1902; see also the entry 'ha-Girgāshī' in the *Hebrew Encyclopaedia Biblica* (which includes a few inaccuracies). For the assumed order of the geonim of Palestine, see Gil, *Hist.*, 659f.; for the relations between these *nesī'im* and the Karaites, *ibid.*, 792f.; The citadel of Abū Thawr: Amari, *Storia*, I, 471, n. 3.

al-Kalbī. The appointment was made in the year 336 (which began on 23 July 947). Al-Kalbī was especially favoured by al-Manṣūr for having been one of the prominent commanders in the fight against the rebel Berbers under Abū Yazīd, an appellation of Makhlad b. Kindād (or Kīdād). Sicily at the time was in a state of near-anarchy; the Muslim source complains that the Christians had become very strong, to the point that the Byzantines (or so it may be interpreted) refused to pay the *māl al-hudna*—the tax which the Emperor was obligated to pay the Muslims in return for maintaining a state of armistice and non-belligerency. On *ʿīd al-ḥiṭr* of 335 (24 April 947), the people of Sicily, led by scions of the al-Ṭabarī family, rose up against the governor, al-ʿAṭṭāf. Many of the governor's army were killed, and he himself had to flee to the citadel. When al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, the new governor, came with the fleet to Māzar, the island was under a reign of terror imposed by the al-Ṭabarī family, and the local population feared so much as to approach the new governor. Only at night and in secret did a few of them gather their courage; they came to al-Ḥasan and told him that the island was greatly opposed to his appointment, and that messengers had been sent to al-Manṣūr to plead with him to recall him. Nevertheless, the new governor entered Palermo, where, thanks to his unique personality, he succeeded in turning the tide of local public opinion in his favour, despite provocations by the Ṭabarīs. An example of the latter was the incident concerning one of al-Ḥasan's men who, invited to the home of a local resident, was later falsely accused by his host of having offended his wife. Al-Ḥasan, admittedly, had the accused man executed; yet, at the same time—with the consent, and even at the orders, of Caliph al-Manṣūr—he imprisoned the Ṭabarīs and their supporters, on the pretext of inviting them to a garden party. The property of all those imprisoned was subsequently confiscated, and order finally prevailed on the island.

This was the beginning of the Kalbids' control of Sicily; the descendants of al-Ḥasan continued to rule the island throughout the tenth and into the eleventh century. ʿAlī, father of al-Ḥasan, was the son-in-law of the abovementioned Sālim b. Rāshid, who had ruled the island from 925 to 936; ʿAlī himself had been killed during the siege of Girgenti, in 938. Al-Ḥasan, as stated above, established order in Sicily and maintained a policy of stringency, which was supported and even encouraged by Caliph al-Manṣūr. A letter written by al-Manṣūr to Jaudhar, secretary of the Fatimid state, reflects the insecurity which had initially prevailed on the island and the severe riots which had then been common. Al-Manṣūr, in the letter, calls for stringency against the disloyal; he cites the case of a certain Muḥammad b. ʿAbdūn – whom he ordered to be imprisoned, although al-Ḥasan had recommended pardon—and orders additional imprisonments as well. Al-Ḥasan retained his post well into al-Muʿizz' time; he then returned to Ifrīqiya and was succeeded by his son Aḥmad, who ruled the island for 16 years (953-969).

During the first decade of Kalbid rule, life in Sicily seems to have been relatively quiet. The first evidence of large-scale battles to have come down to us dates from the year 345 (956/7). At that time, a Fatimid army headed by ʿAmmār ibn al-Husayn, a relative of the governor al-Ḥasan, defeated the Byzantines, and a Fatimid fleet forced the Byzantine navy to flee to Riyū (Reggio). Even greater victories were won by the Muslims in 962-965, un-

der the Kalbid Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan. In Dhū'l-qa'da 351 (December 962), they took Taormina from the Byzantines: (according to Nuwayrī: on 25 December), after seven months of siege. The people of Taormina received an *amān* and were left alive, contingent upon their becoming slaves and giving the Muslims all their property. The Muslims changed the name of the citadel to al-Mu'izzīya, in honour of the caliph. The Christians then urgently sought the aid of Emperor Nicephorus Phocas, who dispatched a great army of more than 40,000 troops. Al-Mu'izz also sent a large force, commanded by Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan, which arrived in Ramaḍān 353 (September or October 964). Again the Muslims scored a great victory, and the Byzantines had to escape for their lives by sea.

In the following year, 965, the Muslims took Rametta; that town was conquered *ʿunwatan*, meaning that all the men were killed, and the women and children taken captive. These Muslim victories inspired Ibn Hānī al-Andalusī—a Spanish poet, fervent supporter of the Fatimids, and contemporary (d. 975) of al-Mu'izz—to write a great epic, in which he exalts the Caliph and mocks the cowardice and wretchedness of the Byzantines; this, as he puts it, was the day of judgment for the *dmstq* (the *domestikos*, title of the Byzantine commander).

Al-Mu'izz, in a letter to Jaudhar concerning Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan, refers to the latter's statement about the difficulty of obtaining wood from Sicily. The shipbuilders of those days had been accustomed to import wood from Taormina and Rametta, and the letter seems to indicate that the (Christian) residents of those places had fled and there was no one left to cut down trees. In another letter, written in 358 or 359, al-Mu'izz approved the awarding of two horses to Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan and his cousin and assistant, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAmmār—probably as an expression of the special esteem in which he held them.

Some ten years later, in Ramaḍān 365 (May 976), the Muslims, headed by the governor, Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, conquered Messina and even launched a raid on Calabria. In the same year, Abū'l-Qāsim ordered the rehabilitation of Rametta.

Let us sum up here by stating that the Muslims did not complete the conquest of the entire island until the 970s, and the takeover of Messina in May 976 may have marked the conclusion of that process. There are still some unclear points in our sources; thus, for example, we do not know the date of the final conquest of Syracuse, though we have seen that the Muslims took the city in 879, but were forced to abandon it several months later. It may be assumed that, following their defeat in 965, the Byzantines also lost that southeast corner of the island, even before losing Messina. In any event, our sources do not confirm the widely accepted opinion that the conquest of the island was allegedly completed in 902; indeed, it seems to have been completed 74 years later, in 976, and may thus be viewed as a process lasting some 150 years. Not in vain, then, did the Scroll of Aḥīma'as immortalize the prophecy of the mysterious Palṭiel b. Shefaṭia to Caliph al-Mu'izz, in the 960s, that he was to conquer *Sicily* (to rule "on the island of Siqīlī'a"); for, at the time, portions of the island were still in Byzantine hands.

From that point on, the island was left in peace by the Byzantines. Yet only too soon, in 982, evil was to descend upon it from the north: Emperor

Otto II of Germany sent a large army (and, according to Arab sources, headed it himself) to attack Sicily. The *Fīranj* (Franks) besieged and conquered the citadel of *Ml̥h* (Amari: Taranto; his editor, Nallino: perhaps Rametta). The panic-stricken Muslims hesitated to attack the invaders; the Franks, aware of their enemies' fear, set out to pursue them on 20 Muḥarram 372 (15 July 982); many Muslims, including the governor, Abū'l-Qāsim, met their death. In the end, however, the Muslims recovered and vanquished the Franks, causing them great losses and forcing them to retreat to Italy (*Rūmiya*). Abū'l-Qāsim ruled the island for 12 years, five months, and five days. His son Jābir was appointed by Caliph al-°Azīz as his father's successor.³¹⁰

(311) We are now approaching the year 1000; the island was to pass from the hands of the Muslims into those of the Normans within two or three generations. The Muslims' weakened resistance was a direct result of the exhausting internal struggle taking place within the neighbouring Muslim countries. The centre of Fatimid rule shifted to Egypt; the Maghrib underwent a difficult process of detachment from the Fatimids; and even the Muslim rule in Spain had entered a process of gradual decay. To all these, we must add the situation in Sicily itself, which had begun to deteriorate under the Kalbids; the boldness and leadership ability of the first rulers of that dynasty gave way to boundless hatred and bloody struggles among its later descendants.

Ibn al-Athīr, chronicler of most of the main events during that period, starts to record this period in 380 (998). At the time, the *amīr* of Sicily was Abū'l-Futūḥ (or Abū'l-Faṭḥ) Yūsuf b. °Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Abī'l-Ḥusayn °Alī al-Kalbī, grandson to the first cousin of the founder of the dynasty. Yūsuf had been appointed by the Fatimid caliph al-°Azīz; it was the next Fatimid caliph, al-Ḥākīm, who awarded him the title of *ta'yīd al-dawla* ("succour of the state"), some time before 996. In 998, Yūsuf became paralyzed along the left side of his body, and was succeeded by his son, *tāj al-dawla* ("crown of the state"), Ja°far. At the end of Rajab 405

³¹⁰ See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 471-473, 492, 543, 556-558, 666f.; IX, 13; X, 194. Ibn Khaldūn, *°Ibar*, IV, 98f., 432-434, 442f.; Abū'l-Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, II, 200f.; Amari, *Storia*, II, 281ff., 197; 302ff., 367ff., 377, 381. Mañšūr: *Jaudhar*, 70-72, 92, 116f.; Lewis, *Naval Power*, 186; Canard, *Jaudhar*, 102, 136, the information given in Ibn Khaldūn, *°Ibar*, IV, 432f., dealing mainly with the battles for Syracuse, belongs to the years 237, 247 (i.e. 851, 861). Concerning the battle of 345 (=956/7), see Stern, *Byzantion*, 20 (1950), 242, who quotes a manuscript of *المجالس والمسيرات* (The councils and the journeys), written apparently in 351 (=962/3), by a contemporary of those events. For the poem recounting the victories of 962-965, see Ibn Hānī, *Dīwān*, 256-264; cf. Canard, *AIEO*, 6 (1942/7), 287f. Concerning Taormina and Rametta and the wood, see Canard, *De Stefano Pres. Vol.*, 572. See the contemporary of these events, al-Da'ūdī, pp. 417-420, who mentions the matter of the wood, and relates that a part of the Muslims living in Girgenti were transferred to Taormina and Rametta, and also to Syracuse. See also: The Scroll of Aḥīma°aṣ, 31: from what Nallino writes in *Enc. ital.*, vol. 31, 683, one gets the impression that the conquest of the island was completed in 895 (except for the assistance rendered to the Christian rebels in Rametta in 963-965 and the Georgios Maniakes affair, see below, in the following section). The Arab sources call Emperor Otto II *Bardawil*; this may be a distortion of *imperator*. In their accounts of the campaign, they mention the story of a Jew who was fighting on the side of the Franks, and who gave his horse to the Emperor after the latter had been unhorsed; the Emperor managed to escape, but the Jew was killed. Otto II married the Byzantine princess Theophano; the campaign which he conducted in southern Italy and Sicily was in line with the policy of Byzantium. See Vasiliev, *History*, 310, 312

(some time around 25 January 1015), Ja'far's brother 'Alī rose up against him. At 'Alī's disposal was an army composed of Berbers and Blacks, who had originally served with the Fatimid armies, and who had apparently come to his aid from Egypt. On 7 Sha'bān 405 (31 January 1015), Ja'far's army defeated that of his brother; 'Alī was captured and executed, after many of his army had fallen in battle. Ja'far then decided to purge the Sicilian army of all foreign troops (that is, of those who had come from the Maghrib or from Egypt), and ordered the slaughter of all the Blacks and the deportation of the Berbers back to Egypt and the Maghrib. From that point on, the Muslims' power on the island declined considerably. Ja'far's appointment of Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Bāghānī as tax officer was, perhaps, an unfortunate choice: al-Bāghānī began to confiscate property, to collect a tithe of all harvests, and to treat the city's leaders and elders with contempt. Predictably, the island's Muslims soon rose up against him, placing his citadel under siege on 6 Muḥarram 410 (14 May 1019). At that point, Ja'far's father Yūsuf intervened: he appealed to the people to spare his son's life, and, in return, declared his other son as *amīr* in Ja'far's stead. That son was Aḥmad, known by the appellation of al-Akḥal, and called *asad al-dawla* ('the lion of the state'). Al-Bāghānī was handed over to the people of Sicily, who killed him. Yūsuf then left the island, after having arranged the departure of his son Ja'far, and went to Egypt. He took with him the sum of 670,000 dinars, but abandoned much property—for example, the source states that he had possessed 13,000 mares, exclusive of mule mares and other beasts of burden, in Sicily; yet, at the time of his death in Egypt, he owned only a single mare.

The Arab source, in a commendatory tone, states that al-Akḥal did take action on behalf of Sicily and of Islam; he turned a strong hand against the towns of the Christians, who certainly composed the majority of the island's population. He attempted to achieve a rapprochement among the island's Muslims, and made special efforts to influence its oldest inhabitants, whose ancestors had come to Sicily from North Africa some 200 years before, to make peace with the new settlers who had come to the island from North Africa during the period of Fatimid rule in Sicily—that is, within the last 50 years.

The ruler of Ifriqiya, al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs, was in the process of weaning himself from dependency on the Fatimids, who were now based in Egypt, and he too sought to be the decisive external factor in control of Sicily. This trend encountered the forceful resistance of al-Akḥal, who sought to free the island from any dependence on external factors. To this end, he had to strengthen the local army, which called for heavy expenditures. In any event, he greatly increased the tax burden on the long-term inhabitants, while granting tax exemption to the new arrivals from Ifriqiya. This aroused great discontent on the island, and the local notables approached al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs and demanded that he intervene against al-Akḥal, stating that otherwise they would appeal to the Byzantines. Al-Akḥal went on to raise the tax burden even more; in this, he was aided by his son Ja'far, on whom the source casts most of the blame. In the end, al-Mu'izz intervened, in 427 (which began on 5 November 1035); more precisely, his intervention almost certainly took place in the summer of 1036. A Berber army, commanded by 'Abdallah, son of al-Mu'izz, was dispatched to the island.

That army entered Palermo and besieged al-Akḥal, who had fortified his own position in al-Khālīṣa. It turned out, however, that al-Akḥal also had many supporters, and a real civil war broke out among the Muslim inhabitants of the island. The war was won by the army from Ifrīqiya, together with al-Akḥal's opponents, and al-Akḥal was killed.

Unfortunately for the Maghribis, the local Muslims then turned against them, killing some 800 of their forces; the foreign army, with its commander ʿAbdallāh b. al-Muʿizz, fled from the island and returned to Ifrīqiya. In the same year, 1036, the people of the island accepted the rule of al-Akḥal's brother al-Ḥasan, known as *ṣamṣām al-dawla* ("battle-ax of the state"). This was the fourth son of Yūsuf b. ʿAbdallāh al-Kalbī (the other sons mentioned thus far are: Jaʿfar, ʿAlī who revolted against Jaʿfar and was executed, and Aḥmad al-Akḥal).

During the 17 years of Aḥmad's rule in Sicily—that is, from the summer of 1019 to the summer of 1036 (according to Ibn Khaldūn, Aḥmad ruled until 417 [1026]; this is apparently an error, as both Ibn al-Athīr and Abū'l-Fidā' give the date as 427)—important events took place, mostly among the Byzantines. Byzantium was occupied at first with a protracted war in Europe, mainly against the Bulgars. After defeating them in 1025, Byzantium began to organize a special army including Wallachian, Turkish, Vandal, Bulgarian, Macedonian and Russian mercenaries, as well as a strong navy—and then launched a campaign in southern Italy. The campaign opened in Calabria, where they overcame the Muslims and restored Byzantine rule. This war continued till 1027, as noted in the Bari chronicle. This chronicle goes on to state that the Byzantines had intended to invade Sicily, but that that plan was never implemented, due to the death of Emperor Basil II (Bulgaroctonus; d. 12 December 1025).

The Arab sources record no details of that campaign, although al-Akḥal's abovementioned actions against the Christians were probably taken at about the same time, and it is more reasonable that those acts of suppression were related to unrest among the Christians in response to rumours concerning the campaign in Calabria. One may, therefore, hypothesize that the Arab sources' reports on al-Akḥal's actions against the Christians run parallel to that campaign which took place in 1025-27.

Ṣamṣām al-dawla apparently sought to maintain a policy of reliance on Egypt, especially as he had to withstand not only intrigues and rioting by the local population, but also the Byzantine threat, which will be discussed in more detail below. The link which he wished to establish with Egypt is attested to by the fact that he sent a special messenger to the Fatimid caliph. Yeshūʿa ha-Kohen b. Joseph, the *dayyān* of Alexandria, mentions in one of his letters a certain Moses b. Joseph (this is Ibn Kashkīl, who will be discussed hereinafter), a Spanish Jew, who had come from Sicily to Alexandria, along with the messenger sent by Ṣamṣām al-dawla. This policy of reliance on Egypt, which included resistance to the Zīrids then ruling Ifrīqiya, continued during the time of internal conflicts which broke out on the island following Ṣamṣām al-dawla's rule; these conflicts, too, will be dealt with later.

Confirmation of the reliance on Egypt may be found in the information regarding the (temporary) revocation of the *ʿushr*, the customs duty on imported merchandise, after ʿAlī ha-Kohen b. Ḥayyim, a leading figure in the

Fustat community, succeeded in obtaining an order (*sijill*) to that effect from the Fatimid caliph (certainly al-Mustansir; apparently during Ibn al-Thumna's rule in Palermo; see also sec. 313 below). The loyalty of Šamšām al-dawla and Ibn al-Thumna to Egypt is also evident in the Sicilian coins of the period, which bore the name of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir until 1064 (see my survey of Sicilian coins hereinafter).

In 1031, while al-Akḥal was still in office, the Byzantines scored a great naval victory over the Muslims. According to Cedrenus, this took place in a sea battle on 28 July; the Muslims lost most of their fleet, and many went to their death, off the coasts of Sicily. Cedrenus' testimony leaves us uncertain as to which Muslim fleet is meant; it seems, however, that this Byzantine chronicler is talking about the continuation of the campaign fought in 1025-27, briefly described above, which is mentioned by Ibn al-Athīr and the chronicler of Bari. Ibn al-Athīr describes a sea battle which supposedly took place immediately afterward, in the same year; however, the true date of this battle does seem to have been 1031, as given by Cedrenus. Al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs, he writes, dispatched a large fleet (this, then, was the Muslim fleet referred to) of 400 ships; the fleet, however, sank in a high storm in Kānūn II (January), near the island of Qawṣara (Pantellaria).

To sum up this campaign, which took place in 1025-1031 (that is, in al-Akḥal's day), one may note the following points: the brunt of the struggle was against local Muslim forces in Calabria accompanied by naval maneuvers. The Muslim side in this conflict was Ifrīqiya, then controlled by the Zīrids; the ruler there at the time was al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs. The struggle began in 1025 with the Byzantine landing in Calabria, and ending with the sinking of the Maghribi fleet, on 28 July 1031.

Only some five years later, in 1036, did al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs renew his involvement on the island by sending an expeditionary force against al-Akḥal. The resulting battle ended in al-Akḥal's downfall; the Maghribi army withdrew from the island in the same year. In June of that year, 1036, the Fatimid caliph al-Zāhir died and was succeeded by his son al-Mustansir. Ruling Byzantium at that time was Emperor Michael IV (the Paphlagonian), whose predecessor, Romanus III (Argyros), had been murdered two years previously, on 15 April 1034.

During that period, an armistice was signed between Egypt and Byzantium. According to Yahyā ibn Sa'īd, the agreement was concluded between Romanus and al-Zāhir, which would mean that it was signed before April 1034. However, Ibn al-Athīr places the agreement in 429 (which began on 14 October 1037)—that is, under the reign of al-Mustansir and Michael IV. Cedrenus and Zonaras note that the agreement was concluded following the death of the Egyptian caliph, and that his Christian widow had been responsible for initiating it. They give the date as AM 6544 (1035)—in which year, as we know, al-Zāhir was still alive. The most likely version is therefore that of Ibn al-Athīr.

The armistice included sections dealing with the Church of the Resurrection and the patriarch of Jerusalem, the rehabilitation of churches within the area ruled by the Fatimids, and the release of Muslim prisoners. No mention was made of Sicily, apparently because the island was not considered as being ruled by Egypt, but was viewed as the problem of the Zīrids of Ifrīqiya. We may therefore suppose that Šamšām al-dawla sought to

bring about a change in this situation, by obtaining the protection of Egypt, and that this had been the real reason for his dispatch of the messenger mentioned in the Geniza document. He may even have sought to exert influence on behalf of Sicily's inclusion in the armistice agreement between Egypt and Byzantium. If this is what he sought, he did not succeed in obtaining it—for, a short time after the signing of the agreement, apparently in 1038, the Byzantines invaded the island, after having secured their own rear from assault by Egypt, by virtue of that same agreement.

According to Cedrenus, Emperor Michael then ordered his general, Georgios Maniakes, to invade the island in order to assist *Apolaphar Makh-oumet*, the *arkhon* (=ruler) of Sicily, in his war against his brother and against *Afris*. The expeditionary force consisted of troops from southern Italy, as well as 500 Normans (Franks, Vikings, Varendians) commanded by Harald Hardraade (Harald, or Harold, the cruel, who later ruled Norway as King Harald III; b. 1015 in Norway, d. 25 November 1066 in battle in England; the Varendians were Normans who had settled in Russia and had come to the Byzantine court to join the Byzantine army in approximately 989, during Valdimir's rule in Kiev). This army took Messina and Syracuse from the hands of the Muslims.

The names given by Cedrenus are undoubtedly distorted; the reference is probably to a man named Abū 'Abdallah (?) Muḥammad, who tried to overthrow his brother and take over Sicily. As the ruler known to us during that time was Ṣamṣām al-dawla al-Ḥasan b. Yūsuf, this Abū 'Abdallah seems to have been a fifth son of Yūsuf b. 'Abdallah al-Kalbī. As to 'Afris', this is undoubtedly a reference to men from Ifrīqiya; yet we do not know if these Ifrīqiyans were an expeditionary force of Maghribi settlers on the island. The Arab sources give no details in this matter, and Amari noted that the Arab sources do not even mention this campaign.

Nevertheless, some small remnant of information which had been included in the Arab source seems to have been preserved by Ibn al-Athīr. After noting that Ṣamṣām al-dawla remained in power in Sicily, he adds the sentence: *واستولى الارادل*, "and *al-arādhil* won"; *al-arādhil* has been interpreted by those who copied it from Ibn al-Athīr (or from the source used by him) as meaning 'the rabble'. Thus, Ibn Khaldūn replaces Ibn al-Athīr's sentence with the words *وغلب السفلة على الاشراف*—that is, "the common people overcame the nobles". This interpretation, however, is illogical, unexpected, and unrelated to the events described in the passage. Therefore, I believe *al-arādhil* to have been a distortion of *arald*, or Harald.

Harald's expedition to Sicily is also mentioned in an anonymous Greek work, *The Epistle on the King's Duties*, which states that Emperor Michael sent him and even awarded him the title of *spatharocandidatus*.

We have no information on the outcome of that campaign in Sicily. Emperor Michael IV died in December 1041, and the Byzantine court went through various upheavals, culminating in the coronation of Emperor Constantine IX (Monomachus), in June 1042. Throughout that time, a war was going on between the Byzantines and the Normans in southern Italy. Georgios Maniakes, who had been dismissed from his post and thrown into prison, returned to southern Italy when Emperor Constantine again had need of his services; he went on to rebel against the Emperor, was declared emperor by the army, and was eventually killed near Salonica. The army

which fought in Sicily seems at some time, probably in the summer of 1042, to have been forced to leave the island, due to these circumstances.³¹¹

(312) The Arab sources give us no information on the course of events in Sicily under Ṣamṣām al-dawla, except for the description of the collapse of Muslim rule on the island and the takeover of its various districts by several army commanders. The qā'id ʿAbdallāh b. Mankūt governed in and around Māzar and Trapani—that is, in the western portion of the island; the qā'id ʿAlī b. Niʿma, or Ibn al-Ḥawwās, in and around Qaṣr Yāna and Girgenti—that is, in the southern and central portion of the island; and the qā'id Ibn al-Thumna in and around Syracuse and Catania—that is, in the eastern portion of the island. Another qā'id, Ibn Miqlātī, the husband of Ibn al-Ḥawwās' sister, had governed Catania. Ibn al-Thumna attacked him from his base in Syracuse, took over Catania, and took Ibn Miqlātī's wife Maymūna for his own; he later overcame the area which had been governed by ʿAbdallāh b. Mankūt, and conquered Māzar and all of its environs. He

³¹¹ See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 348f.; X, 194-196; Abū'l-Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, II, 200f.; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, IV, 449; Nuwayrī, vol. 24, 377. The large proportion of immigrants from North Africa among the Muslim population of Sicily is mentioned in Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 407. Regarding the events related to Byzantium, see Annales Baresnes, *MGH*, SS V, 53f.; Lupus Protospatarius, *ibid.*, 59. See Nallino's note in Amari, *Storia*, II, 417, n. 1, stating that al-Ḥasan could not possibly have been called ṣamṣām al-dawla, but rather, only al-ṣamṣām; he is, however, called ṣamṣām al-dawla in the Geniza letter, and he appears to have received this title from the Fatimid caliph al-Zāhir; the letter written by Yeshūʿa ha-Kohen: 674. For the campaign of 1025, see Cedrenus, II, 479. According to that source, in the year 6534 (as he reckons years from the Creation; 1025 AD), the emperor sent a large army commanded by his loyal eunuch, Orestes; this army had been intended to invade Sicily, but the plan was called off following the emperor's death in December of that year. Cf. Gay, *L'Italie mérid.*, 428f. On the victory of 1031, see Cedrenus, II, 499f.; see also: Lewis, *Naval Power*, 194f. For more information on the maritime campaign, see Amari, *Storia*, II, 423ff. Al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs did not take part in the campaign in Calabria, as he was busy until 1026 with suppressing the revolt of the Zināta and Kitāma tribes, headed by the governor of Tripoli; see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 355; cf. Idris, *Berbérie*, 159, 164. Ṣedāqā b. ʿAyyāsh writes to Ḥesed al-Tustarī, apparently on 5 May 1027, noting that the amīr Sharaf al-dawla (the title of al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs) had entered Tripoli in Libya, bedecked with victory. See 158, right-hand margin. Apparently also belonging to the same time is 190, a letter from Mūsā b. Ishaq b. Ḥisda, who transported a large shipment of goods from Sicily, primarily hides and barley (from Syracuse); the writer notes the fear of soldiers (apparently) deployed on the Sicilian coasts. Mann, *Jews*, I, 203f., errs in writing that Ṣamṣām al-dawla assumed control of the island only after the departure of the Byzantines in 1042; as stated here, he rose to power after al-Akḥal's death in 1036. In another publication—Gil, *Italia Jud.*, I, 88—I erroneously stated that Moses b. Joseph (Ibn Kashkīl) was the emissary of Ṣamṣām al-dawla; in fact, he only traveled by ship together with that emissary. For the *sijill* revoking the ʿushr, see 253, a, II, 19-20. The armistice agreement: Yahyā Ibn Saʿīd (Cheikho), 270f.; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 460; Cedrenus, II, 515 (after the death of Amer, who was the Amermoumne of Egypt); Zonaras, III, 590; and cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 402f., with additional references. On Maniakes' campaign, see Cedrenus (Bonn), II, 545. The silence of the Arab sources concerning the campaign of 1038 is discussed by Amari, *Storia*, II, 417. Admittedly, the root رنل carries the meaning of 'the rabble', but the form رنل is not in any dictionary of my knowledge. See Amari, *Storia*, II, 482, who interpreted the word as *uomini di vil condizione*. Abū'l-Fidā': "the *khārījīs* took over". The Greek source is in the appendix to Kekaumenos, *Strategikon*, 97; see Beck, *Vademecum*, 141f. and also 163, n. 14; cf. Dawkins, *Marett Pres. Vol.*, 39f.; Ostrogorsky, *Hist.*, 332f.; Vasiliev, *Hist.*, 313, 329; Amato, *Storia*, I, 68; Aprile, *Cronologia*, 65ff.; Delarc, *Les Normands*, 93f.; and cf. Gay, *L'Italie mérid.*, 436, 450-468. The fact that the Arab source saw fit to preserve, of all the details of the campaign, only the name of Harald, contradicts the view of Gay, *L'Italie mérid.*, 453, of a relatively inferior role which the Normans played in that campaign.

apparently had ambitions of taking over the entire island, and went so far as to call himself al-Qādir bi'llāh, 'the powerful', or "the successful, with (the help of) God".

From that point on, the figures of power remaining on stage were the two brothers-in-law, Ibn al-Ḥawwās and Ibn al-Thumna, and the developments of the next years took the form of a family drama. Under the influence of strong drink, Ibn al-Thumna abused his wife Maymūna, commanding that the veins of her wrists be slashed; she could well have died, had her son Ibrahīm not called the doctors in time to save her life. Maymūna decided to go to live with her brother, Ibn al-Ḥawwās, with the consent of Ibn al-Thumna, who even allowed her to take presents to him. Ibn al-Ḥawwās became obsessed with revenge on Ibn al-Thumna for his cruel treatment of his sister. This led to the outburst of armed conflict between the two armies. Ibn al-Thumna managed to take control of most of the island, and even the capital, Palermo, surrendered to him. Ibn al-Thumna subsequently laid siege to Ibn al-Ḥawwās in Qaṣr Yāna. That campaign, however, went badly for Ibn al-Thumna: he was severely defeated and many of his men were killed.

Ibn al-Thumna then sought the aid of the infidels. According to Ibn al-Athīr, there were infidels then stationed in the city of Mālta, where, as he attests, there was still a force of *fīranj*—of Franks, who had come with their commander, Bardawīl, at the time of the invasion of 372 (982/3). We have, indeed, noted above that Ibn al-Athīr's description of the campaign of 982 refers to the city of *Mlth*, to which Nallino commented that the reference could be to Rametta (above, sec. 310); in fact, in describing these actions of Ibn al-Thumna, Ibn Khaldūn refers to *Rmth*, i.e. Rametta.

The Arab sources give us no clear-cut information on the dates of the abovementioned events. Ibn al-Athīr notes that that alliance with the Franks—who are none other but the Normans under Roger—took place in Rajab 444 (November 1052). Amari, on the other hand, notes that, in this connection, Ibn al-Athīr (who was later copied by others) had probably made an error: that the said date refers to the end of Ṣamsām al-dawla's rule, which was also the end of the Kalbid dynasty in Sicily, whereas according to him, the Norman invasion took place only in the 1060s; but, as we shall find out later, the Norman invasion began earlier, in 1056.

We have at our disposal a passage of a letter written by Ḥayyim b. °Ammār, apparently from Palermo, to Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī in Qayrawān, in approximately 1045. From those portions which are still legible, we receive the impression that matters in Sicily were not in good order. Especially interesting is the sentence: *al-balad taḥt shūrā*—meaning that the *jamā'a*, the assembly of Muslims in Palermo, was the body running the city. Trade with the island at that time was more or less regular, in both imports and exports.

A letter written by Barhūn b. Isaac, the addressee of Ḥayyim b. °Ammār's letter, in August 1051 from Tripoli in Libya to his cousin Nehorai b. Nissim in Fustat, mentions merchandise sent from Sicily, including valuable clothing, such as "a *siqlāṭūn* garment of Antioch yellow". A letter written from Fustat on 8 April 1052 by Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī to Makhlūf b. Mūsā of Palermo states that the writer's partner, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Azhar, is about to arrive in Palermo; that he still owes the writer

money and some of the goods bought in partnership. Therefore: "Please, when he arrives in Sicily, in the name of God, take from him the balance owed to me", etc. A letter written in Alexandria from Abraham b. Farrāḥ to Nehorai b. Nissim, which we have reason to believe was written on 21 July 1053, states that "the news from Sicily are even better than before". Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī, writing at about the same time from Alexandria to Joseph b. 'Alī Kohen Fāsī, also mentions the impending arrival of merchandise from Sicily to Alexandria. The son of that Mūsā, Barhūn, in an accounting list prepared in the summer of 1055 and referring to business done in 1054, mentions a load of lacquer which he sent to Palermo. A later accounting list by that same Barhūn b. Mūsā, written in 1057 and referring to business done in 1056, also includes details on purchases made in Sicily. The accounting was sent to a partner in Palermo, as it mentions a meeting between the writer and the partner which took place there. Barhūn sent instructions to Tripoli to transfer 26 dresses to Palermo for his partner; the accounting mentions money to be paid by the partner to Zakkār b. 'Ammār, as well as various payments to be made in Palermo (although the details of these payments have not come down to us) and shipments of wheat. The merchandise was intended for marketing in Palermo and in Māzar.

Abraham b. Farrāḥ, writing again from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim in approximately 1055, mentions that Zakkār b. 'Ammār sent oil from Palermo, but that not all of the oil reached Egypt, as the jars were in poor condition and one of them arrived entirely empty. In another letter to Nehorai, written on 25 August 1056 and also sent from Alexandria, Abraham b. Farrāḥ mentions a ship which docked for a brief visit to Tripoli in Libya, and set sail the next day for Māzar, and from there to Syracuse, where it was loaded with a cargo of fruit juice to bring to Alexandria. The same letter mentions ships unloading merchandise in Māzar and setting sail from there for Messina. Another letter—this one written about a month and a half later, on 11 October 1056, to Yeshū'a b. Isma'īl—speaks of a ship which belonged to the *sayyida* ('the Lady'; this is Umm Malāl, the aunt of al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs, ruler of Ifrīqiya [Bādīs' sister]), which was at anchor in Māzar, and of "the big ship" which came into Trapani (Iṭranish).

Nehorai b. Nissim, writing to 'Awād b. Hananel in about 1056, mentions a shipment which arrived in Sicily for the addressee. A shipping certificate written by Nehorai b. Nissim in about 1056 lists various types of merchandise: woven fabrics, caps, hides, silk, various garments, carpets; Nehorai apparently arranged the shipment of these goods from Sicily. We also have an accounting list drawn up by Nehorai in 1061, in which he listed details of his dealings with Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār of Palermo, including sums of money, pearls, coats, flax and silk. These dealings had apparently been conducted several years beforehand with Isma'īl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī, who had meanwhile died and Nehorai had taken it upon himself to complete the accounting.

Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, writing from Mahdiyya on 2 February 1063 to Yeshū'a b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, tells of an incident involving a shipment of lacquer (apparently sent in 1061) to Palermo, which had reached Māzar instead. Joseph had subsequently asked Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār of Palermo, more than once, to get the lacquer out of Māzar and ship it to Mahdiyya, but he had been unable to do so. Instead, he had transferred the lacquer

to Palermo, and Joseph had been charged high tax duties. Joseph had complained about this, but Ḥayyim b. °Ammār had reminded him that he had had to do it that way *out of fear*. At the time the letter was written, it was still impossible to ship the merchandise to Mahdiyya, and it was currently being stored in a warehouse belonging to Tammām b. Zikrī. Joseph had sent a letter to Tammām, asking him to send the lacquer to Mahdiyya before winter, but had received no reply. Although the difficult situation could be interpreted as justifying Ḥayyim b. °Ammār's conduct, Joseph still thought that Ḥayyim had handled the matter improperly.³¹²

(313) Although the abovementioned Geniza letters do not give explicit details concerning events on the island, they nevertheless furnish several vantage points. It is, admittedly, impossible to reach a clear-cut conclusion regarding the fate of Šamsām al-dawla, and especially the date when he ceased to rule the island (which also marked the end of the Kalbid dynasty). Still, the approximate date seems to be the middle 1040s, based on the information that, at the time, the city of Palermo was being administered by the Muslim council, the *shūrā*. From that time till approximately 1056, Sicily enjoyed about a decade of relative tranquillity, under the *quwwād* (plural of *qā'id*, "military commander") as stated above. These *quwwād* appear to have been connected with the Fatimids and considered them as their principal authority and mainstay against possible intervention by the Zīrid ruler of Ifrīqiya, al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs. A letter written by Nehorai b. Nissim in about 1053 mentions an order given by al-Mustaṣṣir, the Fatimid caliph of Egypt, revoking the *ushr* (the tax on imports) in Palermo. During that period, one of the governors of Sicily found that the forces at his disposal were large enough to permit him to intervene in Ifrīqiyan affairs; when a revolt against al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs broke out in Sūsa, in the year 445 (which began on 23 April 1053), the *ṣāḥib* ('master') of Sicily sent an army to assist the rebels.

The next years marked the start of the internal wars launched by Ibn al-Thumna. These wars are reviewed above, to the extent that they are reflected in Ibn al-Athīr and other sources; however, those sources do not give dates for the various incidents. Hints of these wars begin to appear in the Geniza letters; I have cited a letter from Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī, which mentions the *fear* of shipping merchandise from Māzar to Mahdiyya. On 15 September 1053, Isma'īl b. Farah, who apparently resided in the flax-growing center of Būṣīr, wrote a letter mentioning a shipment of silk and wax from Māzar that the writer's brother Sulaymān had managed to transfer safely, after having waited a year. Yet, in the same letter, he mentions ten ships which reached Alexandria from Sicily; on board each ship were 500 people, refugees "from the cursed land"—the reference being,

³¹² See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 195-198; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, IV, 449f.; Abū'l Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, II, 201; Amari, *Storia*, II, 481-489, 548f., 616f., 619; Delarc, *Les Normands*, 356f.; Chalandon, *Hist.*, I, 191ff. The fragment of Ḥayyim b. °Ammār's letter: 648, and see line 12. Barhūn b. Isaac: 382, b. ll. 11-21. Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl: 317, a, ll. 8ff. Abraham b. Farrāh: 545, a, l. 17. Mūsā b. Barhūn: 337, a, l. 12. Barhūn b. Mūsā: 354, h, l. 1; the oil from Palermo: 549, a, ll. 11-14. The other letters of Abraham b. Farrāh: 552, a, ll. 12-15; 553, ll. 8-9. Umm Malāl, see Ibn 'Idhārī, I, 272, and cf. Idris, *Berbérie*, 131, 141; she died on 18 October 1023, and the ship apparently continued to bear her name. Nehorai: 264, b, l. 2. The shipping certificate: 292; Ḥayyim b. °Ammār's business dealings: 295, b, ll. 6ff. Joseph b. Mūsā: 372, a, ll. 29ff.

obviously, to Sicily. Another letter from Ismaʿīl to his son Farah, also sent from Alexandria—this one written 12 days later, on 27 September—mentions that only people from Palermo (Sīqillīn) had arrived in b. Shiblūn's ship; the Maghribi merchants ('the Westerners') had all set sail from Māzar. The same letter contains information about a letter written by Sulaymān b. Farah, the addressee's uncle (i.e. the writer's brother), from Māzar, at the beginning of Tishri (around 20 September 1053). The later letter contained details on the state of distress and starvation, and even on a case of cannibalism. "Of so much sorrow, even mountains would collapse...; whoever had some means of his own departed (from Sicily), and whoever was holding means of other people, consumed them; there even was a case of people having eaten a man". And further: "My sister and her daughters arrived (from Sicily) in Mahdiyya. 23 families, including the men, were with them, all bound for Mahdiyya, completely destitute and naked". The son, Farah, wrote to Nehorai b. Nissim, also from Alexandria, on 5 June 1056, informing him that a ship had arrived from Palermo, and that its passengers "say that all of the goods are worthless"; this may mark the beginning of the difficult days in Sicily, and may reflect the rumours from elsewhere on the island, and the general atmosphere of worry.

The significance of these rumours and the atmosphere caused by them becomes clearer in a letter written from Alexandria on 6 September 1056 by Joseph b. Farah to his nephew Farah b. Ismaʿīl in Fustat. The writer mentions that he received a letter from a certain Abraham (perhaps the writer's brother), written in the middle of the month of Av, or on 29 July of that year. In his letter, Abraham had written that, after having set sail from Mahdiyya with a shipment of 100 skins of oil and other assorted merchandise, such as silk, cloth, dresses and flax, they were attacked by Ibn al-Thumna's troops near Girgenti and robbed of most of their goods. The soldiers, however, had left them the oil, and they had arrived in Māzar and were selling it. Abraham had been robbed by the soldiers of his clothes and even his head covering, leaving him only a cloak. This, then, is a reflection of Ibn al-Thumna's war against Ibn al-Ḥawwās, as Girgenti belonged to the latter's territory.

As for Māzar, it seems to have been under Ibn al-Thumna's rule for some time previously—that is, he seems to have ejected ʿAbdallah b. Mankūt, the former ruler of that area, several years before, since we read that the state of affairs in Māzar was more or less normal, and that the city's economic activities were being conducted in an orderly manner. In the same letter, Abraham had written that Sulaymān, another brother, was preparing a large quantity of cloth (or clothing), decorating them with *ṭirāz* (embroidery), and preparing to bring them to Māzar. He also noted that the *ʿushr*, the special customs duty on merchandise, was being raised higher and higher. We may interpret this as meaning that Ibn al-Thumna was in need of financing for his battles. Labrāʾ b. Moses b. Sughmār, writing on 19 August 1056 from Sūsa to his brother Judah in Fustat, quotes a letter he received from another merchant, Joseph b. Khalfa, which stated that "the *ṣāhib* of Māzar" had sequestered a shipment of flax which had arrived for Joseph. As stated above, that governor of Māzar was none other than Ibn al-Thumna; the sequestration in question was obviously related to the *ʿushr*.

On 2 September 1056, Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār writes from Palermo, having gone there to accompany a cargo of merchandise: "I arrived and was saved from the enemy". He adds that he had almost been "powerless before the enemy". Although he does not specify the allegiance of the ships which endangered his journey, nor the identity of 'the enemy', the one reasonable possibility is the Normans.

In another letter, written from Mahdiyya on 4 August 1057, Labrāt b. Moses notes that "the situation is getting worse, and people are very perplexed because of Sicily, and what has been done to it by the enemy, who took over most of it". The 'enemy' can only be the Normans called in by Ibn al-Thumna. Later in the letter, he complains that prices in Mahdiyya had skyrocketed, "because this country is dependent on it (on Sicily) all the time in matters of food". Further on, he notes that 12 Jewish families ("of our people") had been taken prisoner in Sicily, and also an innumerable mass of Muslims; and that Messina had been taken "by the sword", and that there had been fatalities there, including Jews. "And things are happening there (in Sicily) which all lead to destruction".

Again, at about the same time, Nissim b. Ḥalfon writes from Damsīs in Egypt to Nehorai b. Nissim, informing him that 'the enemy' had taken over two ships, and that "our people" on board had been hurt; "may God give replacements to those who lost much wealth, and may He have mercy on those who died in them". In another letter to Nehorai, written a short time afterward, he also mentions two ships (apparently, the same two ships as in the previous letter) which were taken by 'the enemy'. Another letter written at about the same time is that sent by Mardūkh b. Mūsā of Alexandria to Barhūn b. Šālīḥ al-Tāhīrī. The writer expresses concern and fear "that we will be hurt by what we will suffer from the gentiles and what they will do to us because of this terrible affair"; and later, "that damned affair". Nissim b. Ḥalfōn b. Benaiah, who wrote the letter for Mardūkh, adds in his own name that they have no information on the ships supposed to arrive in Sicily; he, too, expresses concern over "what we have come to know, may God help". A contemporary letter written from Alexandria by Farah b. Ismaʿīl to Nehorai b. Nissim notes that an order came from the authorities (in Egypt) concerning travel to Sicily, followed by a contradicting order, and that there was a lot of confusion in this matter. These orders, too, seem to be connected to the events which began to take place in Sicily, and to the Norman invasion and takeover of large portions of the island. More explicit references are found in a letter written in Mahdiyya by Labrāt b. Moses b. Sughmār on 9 January 1058, regarding the prevailing fear of the Normans (*al-ifranj*), who had invaded Sicily en masse; the population feared they would conquer Siqilliyya, i.e. Palermo.³¹³

³¹³ Nehorai's letter: 253, a, ll. 19-20; see also below, in the discussion on the taxes in Sicily. The *ṣāhib* of Sicily: al-Tijānī, in Amari, *Bibl.*, 377f. Ismaʿīl b. Farah's letter: 489, ll. 4-6; and cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, pp. 215, 315. The other letter: 491, a, l. 15; b, ll. 12-14. Both letters reflect the serious events which were then taking place in Qayrawān and the unfortunate lot of the refugees who fled from there to Mahdiyya. Farah's letter: 503, l. 12; Joseph b. Farah: 513, a, ll. 6-13, 15-16, 18; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 330. Labrāt b. Moses, from Sūsa: 614, b, ll. 20-23; from Mahdiyya: 616, a, ll. 42ff. Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār: 650, a, ll. 8-10. Nissim b. Ḥalfōn: 589, ll. 6-9; 592, l. 11. Mardūkh b. Mūsā: 538, a, ll. 10-11, 13; b, ll. 5-6. Farah b. Ismaʿīl: 506, a, margin, top, and continued in b. Labrāt: 617, b, ll. 37-38.

(314) The letters of the Maghribi Jewish merchants cited so far show that the fateful appeal made by Ibn al-Thumna to the Normans apparently occurred in 1056. From Ibn al-Athīr we learn that the men of the island—that is, the Muslims in that portion not yet conquered by the Normans, and certainly those of Palermo first of all—sent a delegation to al-Mūʿizz b. Bādīs, asking him to come to their aid. Al-Mūʿizz apparently responded to their request in the affirmative, although he himself was then quite severely beset by the Bedouin tribes. He organized a large fleet during the winter (surely the winter of 1055-56), and the fleet did set sail; unfortunately, most of its ships sank near the island of Qawṣara, which is Pantellaria. This naval failure, writes Ibn al-Athīr, weakened al-Muʿizz and caused him to lose Qayrawān. This information reported by Ibn al-Athīr is enough to prove that the Norman invasion took place mainly in 1056, as can be inferred also from the Geniza letters.

Extremely significant in this connection is a letter written by Joseph b. Farah of Fustat to his nephew Farah b. Ismaʿīl, then residing in Būṣīr. The letter, dated 22 December 1055, states *inter alia* that, on the previous day, the writer had met with Abūʿl-Ḥusayn ibn al-Shārī, a Muslim ship owner known to us from several Geniza letters; Abūʿl-Ḥusayn had told him that he had proposed to the *mishnē* ('the deputy')—probably al-Muʿizz' vizier or aide—to transport his expeditionary force in his own two ships. The passage that follows is rather confusing: the *mishnē* guaranteed him 10,000 dinars for the two ships (?); Abūʿl-Ḥusayn had asked him not to tell anyone; Joseph had gone on to say "(but) the men of Sicily (will tell?)". He later adds that there are differences of opinion (based on religion?) between the two parties—the men of Sicily and the men of al-Muʿizz (?). Despite the fact that these details are incomprehensible, they nonetheless confirm the information regarding the Maghribi expeditionary force which came to the aid of the Muslims in Sicily in mid-winter (and no wonder that most of the ships sank!).

The Norman conquest of Sicily, as we know, was a slow process. In the western portion of the island, including Māzar and Palermo, the Muslims managed to hold on for about another 15 years.

On 31 August 1062, al-Muʿizz died and was succeeded by his son Tamīm, who sent a fleet and an army to Sicily in 1063, with his own sons Ayyūb and ʿAlī. Ayyūb and some of the army landed in Palermo, whereas ʿAlī and the remaining forces landed in Girgenti. In the summer of 1063, a battle took place between those Maghribis and Ibn al-Ḥawwās—which was unexpected, as the Maghribis were supposed to be assisting him against the Normans; however, a conflict appears to have broken out between the two Muslim factions. The local populace, particularly the people of Girgenti, supported the Maghribis. In this conflict, Ibn al-Ḥawwās was killed. The sons of Tamīm and the Maghribi forces continued to control the western part of the island, but the local Muslim population began to rise against them. Thus we see that, despite the constant danger from the Normans, the Muslims of the island chose to act against those sent to help them. When the battles developed into full-scale war between the two factions, Ayyūb and ʿAlī (the sons of Tamīm) decided to abandon the island, which they did in the year 461 (which began on 31 October 1068; it may be assumed that they actually left in the early summer of 1069).

Ibn al-Thumna was murdered in the spring of 1062 (apparently in early March). According to the monk Goffredo Malaterra, a contemporary of the events in Sicily, whose chronicle dates from the late eleventh century, Ibn al-Thumna (Betumen) was killed trying to reconquer the citadel of Antilium (=Rocca d'Entella), in the Palermo district. The ruler of the citadel, Nichel (we cannot determine which Arab name lies at the root of this distortion), pretended to be one of Ibn al-Thumna's supporters; when Ibn al-Thumna came to meet him, he and his men killed Ibn al-Thumna's horse and then murdered the man himself. This incident is recorded among the events of 1062.

A mention of Ibn al-Thumna's death may be found in a letter written by Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī of Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim. If the murder did indeed take place in 1062, the letter was written on 12 August of that year. Yeshū'ā states that a ship arrived from Māzar bearing a group of Jewish merchants from Spain. According to those merchants, the situation in Sicily was good, the news were good, and following Ibn al-Thumna's murder, the city had calmed down (the reference is apparently to Māzar, as the merchants had come from there). It should be noted that even during those years—that is, from 1057 to 1069—we have information on continued trade relations with Sicily. In 1063, Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī copied a memorandum concerning an arrangement between himself and his business partner, Khallūf b. Mūsā of Palermo, with whom he had quarrelled. The agreement, *inter alia*, states that the two must go to Palermo to arbitrate their case. It also mentions business done in Sicily, payments in gold dinars minted in Sicily, and a fine of 50 dinars to be paid to *'aniyē siṣliya* ("the poor of Sicily")—that is, to the pious foundation devoted to the poor of Palermo—should the agreement be breached. Salāma b. Mūsā al-Safāquṣī writes—apparently on 7 September 1064—from Māzar, to Judah b. Moses b. Sughmār. The letter discusses a partnership between Jewish and Muslim merchants concerning the marketing of oil in Palermo; recounts the fact that its writer, Salāma b. Mūsā, had even gone to live in Sicily, despite the war going on there; and adds that a ship laden with cargo belonging to Jewish merchants had been attacked by 'the enemy'—that is, the Normans—and had found safe harbour in Shāqa (Sicacca), on the southwestern coast of the island, near Māzar. The activity of the Norman fleet is also reflected in a more serious incident reported by Salāma: the burning of ships laden with cargo belonging to Jewish merchants, while they were docked in Palermo. The burning of the ships in Palermo is also reported by Āvōn b. Ṣedāqā, writing from Jerusalem on 11 November 1064, who notes that he had given the head of the Palestinian yeshiva, Elijah ha-Kohen b. Solomon, a letter from Nehorai b. Nissim containing, *inter alia*, "the news from Sicily and the burning of the ships". There can therefore be no doubt that this incident took place in 1064 (apparently in late summer).

In approximately 1065, a letter from Mūsā b. Abī'l-Hayy in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim tells of the arrival in Māzar of a Jew from Mahdiyya, Nissim b. 'Aṭiyya, the partner of Ḥasūn b. Isaac of Māzar. The newcomer brought with him a cargo of lead, oil, and fabrics, and had great trouble in Māzar concerning the *'ushr* tax on goods. In another letter, written a bit later to Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī, Mūsā b. Abī'l-Hayy writes of *al-markab*

al-jadīd ("the new ship"). There had been disturbing rumours regarding that ship, whose fate had been unknown, until a letter arrived stating that the ship had set sail from Palermo to Māzar, but had lost its way and reached *bilād al-rūm* (apparently that part of the island already occupied by the Normans). The ship stayed there for 15 days before returning safely to Māzar in Sicily; great losses, however, were incurred to its cargo, which had gotten wet. The same letter mentioned in Mūsā's letter also included some very bad news concerning Sicily: the island was under the control of the enemy, except for Palermo, Māzar, and Qaṣr Yāna, which were still held by the Muslims. Many of the population chose to escape to Ifrīqiya. It was very difficult to hire beasts of burden on the island, as the hire fee had gone up to 23 dinars and even higher.

At about the same time, a letter written from Alexandria by an inhabitant of Palermo, David b. ʿAmmār, to Nehorai b. Nissim, describes the suffering of the people of Palermo. According to that letter, the only contact between Palermo and Māzar at the time was by sea; this corresponds to Amari's information that the two sections of the island still held by the Muslims—the Palermo area in the north, and the Girgenti-Māzar area in the south—were cut off from each other. Palermo had been taken over by the son of Abū'l-Ḥusayn; the reference may be to a son of the Zīrid, ʿAlī b. Tamīm (because "Abū'l-Ḥusayn" is a nickname for men named ʿAlī). This may indicate that, after having killed Ibn al-Thumna and Ibn al-Ḥawwās, the Maghribis controlled Sicily, and the ruling family, the Zīrids, were placed in charge of those parts of the island which were still in Muslim hands, until the uprising of the local populace forced them to abandon the island, as described above.

Again during the same period, Jacob b. Nahum writes from Tripoli in Libya to Nehorai. Among other things, the writer asks Nehorai to send him the flax he ordered; if there is no appropriate ship, he adds, please have the flax sent to Sicily—that is, to Palermo—from where "our people" will have it sent to Tripoli. Abraham b. Farrāḥ writes from Alexandria on 11 June 1066; his letter gives the impression that trade with Sicily was still going on as usual. A ship owned by Ibn al-Iskandar carried spices (*saqaṭ*) to Sicily; *al-markab al-kabīr* ("the big ship") carried six loads of flax; a ship owned by al-Mufaḍḍal carried five loads of flax and two small loads (*barqalawayn*) of spices. In approximately 1067, Farah b. Joseph writes from Alexandria to Judah b. Manasseh and describes grave events which had taken place in Palermo: *hādhihi 'l-miḥna*. In about 1068, Salāma b. Mūsā, writing from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim, writes that everyone in Sicily was waiting to see how things would turn out (with the war), and adds that the situation in Māzar was better than in Palermo.³¹⁴

³¹⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 196-198; Joseph b. Farah: 515, a, ll. 12-16. Idris, *Berbérie*, 171 discusses the time of the failure of the fleet sent by al-Muʿizz and suggests that this occurred even before 1050, and may never have occurred at all, but rather, that Ibn al-Athīr was repeating the story of the fleet dispatched by al-Muʿizz which sank in January 1026; as we have seen, however, his assumptions are unfounded. Concerning the date of al-Muʿizz' death, the Arab sources offer conflicting information. See Amari, *Storia*, III, 89-96; Idris, *Berbérie*, 283f.; see also Aprile, 68-79; Delarc, 348-356; Chalandon, I, 193-198. The letter by Yeshūʿa b. Ismaʿīl: 312, a, ll. 8-12; I have admittedly suggested a date for that letter in accordance with the information taken from Malaterra, stating that Ibn al-Thumna was killed in 1062, as the writer of the letter did not note the year. See regarding the killing of

(315) In the last phase of the conquest of Sicily, and the last two or three years in which Palermo remained under Muslim rule, the Geniza letters assume an important role: it is mainly through these documents that we know of the last Muslim ruler, Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣāʾigh (the Jeweller), known as Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ al-Andalusī, and also as Ibn al-Ṣāʾigh.

The Arab source which mentions him in connection with Sicily is the *Mirʾāt al-zamān* of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī. That work notes that, in the year 463 (which began on 9 October 1070), the *fīranj* took over the island of Sicily; the reason for this was that its governor was a man called Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ. When the ruler (*ṣāhib*) of Egypt sent to ask him for money, he could not pay what he was asked; “for that reason, he sent for the *fīranj* and opened the gate of the city to them; then they came in and killed him and took over the island”. There is a certain confusion here between the island of Sicily and the city of Palermo, and the reference is obviously to the conquest of Palermo; nonetheless, there was definitely a ruler named Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ, even though Amari denies it. Muḥammad Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ is mentioned in Ibn al-Athīr regarding the events of the year 457 (which began on 13 December 1064); in that Muslim year (that is, in 1065), Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz sought to hold peace talks with al-Nāṣir b. Ḥammād, his cousin and enemy. As his delegate to this end, he appointed Muḥammad Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ, about whom his councillors stated that “he is a *gharīb* (not a local man), and you have behaved favourably toward him and he has earned (much) money and property thanks to you”. Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ set out on his way; encountering a settlement of Berbers, Bijāya, he decided that this would be an ideal place to establish a port city (Ibn al-Athīr describes this under the title *Concerning the construction of the city of Bijāya*). Ibn al-Athīr goes on to state that by this Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ betrayed Tamīm, conspired with al-Nāṣir, and also convinced him to build Bijāya, which would serve him as a base for maintaining control of Ifrīqiya. He was eventually caught and, according to Ibn al-Athīr, executed by Tamīm (which is untrue, as we will see later). We may assume that Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ had been in the service of the Fatimids all along.

The Geniza documents confirm the information given by Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī concerning the role played by Muḥammad Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ in the last two or three years of Muslim rule in and around Palermo. He is mentioned in dozens of Geniza letters. His full name was Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān al-Ṣāʾigh b. al-Baʿbāʿ al-Andalusī. The appellative ‘al-Andalusī’ indicates that his family originally came from Spain. His father, Abūʾl-Qāsim ʿAbd-al-Raḥmān b. Khalaf al-Ṣāʾigh (the jeweller or goldsmith), is also mentioned in the Geniza letters, as having had close business connections with the Maghribi Jewish merchants; some of the letters men-

Ibn al-Thumna, Malaterra, 36; concerning this author, see Amari, *Storia*, III, 25ff.; cf. Amari, III, *ibid.*, 89. The memorandum: 319; on this dispute, see also 344; cf. Goitein, *Letters*, 120ff. Salāma b. Mūsā: 751, a, ll. 29-30, 32-33; b, ll. 46-47; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 294. On Salāma’s move from Safāḡuṣ to take up residence in Sicily: 751, b, ll. 36-39; 752, ll. 11-12. Avōn b. Ṣedāqā, see: Gil, *Hist.*, 251, 276. Mūsā b. Abīʾl-Ḥayy: 453, a, margin, top, ll. 9 ff.; 460, a, ll. 12-21; b. l. 3. David b. ʿAmmār: 656, b, l. 4. Jacob b. Nahum: 691, a, ll. 20-23. Farāḡ b. Joseph: 524, a, l. 17. Salāma b. Mūsā: 753, b, l. 18. Abraham b. Farrāḡ (1066): 556, a, ll. 11-12.

tion a partnership between him and Nehorai b. Nissim and his relatives, the Tāhīrtīs and others. Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c is mentioned in the letters of the Maghribi merchants as owning ships often chartered by those merchants to transfer import and export cargo to and from Egypt, Spain, the Maghrib, and Sicily, as well as letters and sums of money.

In the 1020s and 1030s, and even later, the ship of al-Andalusī is often mentioned; this may well have been a reference to Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c, or perhaps to his father, but we cannot tell for certain. A letter whose date is estimated at 4 May 1027, from Ṣedāqā b. °Ayyāsh of Alexandria to Ḥesed b. Yāshār al-Tustarī, mentions the ship of Master Abū °Abdallah al-Andalusī; this is a clear reference to Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c. Ṣedāqā's son °Ayyāsh, writing in about 1045, mentions Abū °Abdallah's ship. From that point on, Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c and his ships are mentioned in many letters written by Maghribi merchants. He is cited as carrying various cargoes: flax, textiles, etc. Especially prominent is the fact that he was entrusted with large sums of money, in dinars and dirhams, and was obviously considered to be trustworthy. His ships were active in the Alexandria—Mahdiyya—Sicily (Māzar and Palermo) triangle, in both directions.

There is even a possibility that Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c was of Jewish extraction. Both the profession of his grandfather (and perhaps that of his father as well)—a jeweller, or goldsmith—and his name, Khalaf, were fairly characteristic of Jews. Also, the Geniza documents include a *suftaja* (cheque, or payment order), written by Abraham b. Farrāh on 1 May 1052, to the order of Nehorai b. Nissim, and addressed to *al-shaykh Abū °Abdallah Muḥammad ibn °Abd al-Raḥmān*, i.e. Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c, who is thereby asked to pay its bearer the sum of 40 dinars. This *suftaja* is written in Hebrew script! We may thus assume that Khalaf the jeweller was a Spanish Jew who converted to Islam. His grandson, Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c, was evidently a devout of the extreme Shī'a, the Fatimids, as will become quite obvious below.³¹⁵

³¹⁵ Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (MS Paris, Ancien fonds 641, in Amari, *Bibl.*, 326). See Amari, *Storia*, II, 552; Ibn al-Athīr, X, 46ff., and cf. Idris, *Berberie*, 267-271, and especially 270. Ṣedāqā b. °Ayyāsh: 158, a, ll. 16, 19. °Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā: 475, a, ll. 7-8. Various mentions of Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c: Nissim b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī, in approximately 1050: 389, a, l. 39 and margin. At about the same time, Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: 444, margin; 447, a, l. 7 (Ishaq b. Khalaf and Tammām b. Zarbī, together with Mūsā's brother Abraham, sailed in his ship from Alexandria). Jacob b. Salmān al-Ḥarīrī, in about 1052, announces that merchandise of "b. °Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ba^cbā^c"—that is, merchandise transported in his ship—arrived safely in Mahdiyya: 662, a, ll. 10-11. The *qarīb* belonging to Abū °Abdallah is mentioned in a letter written by Abraham b. Farrāh from Alexandria in about 1053: 546, a, margin. In 1055, Ibn al-Ba^c biyā(!) travels in the *amīr's qunbār*, taking with him a pouch containing 4,000 dirhams belonging to Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī: 354 (accounting list), f, l. 11. At the same time, we learn that the ship of "Master Abū °Abdallah has not yet reached the open sea", as is stated in a letter by Elia b. Judah from Alexandria: 706, a, l. 7. A letter written by Farāh b. Isma'īl from Alexandria dated 5 June 1056 mentions another letter sent to Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c, along with a pouch containing 83½ dinars: 503, a, l. 3. Abraham b. Farrāh, writing from Alexandria on 25 August 1056, notes that Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c—whom he mentions by his full name: Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣā'igh—had already unloaded his goods in Māzar: 552, a, l. 9, and margin. On 11 October 1056, the same notes that "my lord and master Abū °Abdallah has come to Māzar overland" (apparently from Palermo): 553, a, l. 10. On 18 August 1056, Maymūn b. Khalfā, writing from Palermo, mentions "the ships (plural!) of Master Abū °Abdallah ibn al-Ba^cbā^c": 561, a, ll. 3-4; b, l. 23 (Nehorai b. Nissim sent letters to Sicily in those ships; he also shipped in them a load of flax from Egypt to Sicily). Several years later (apparently), Jacob b. Isma'īl writes from Sicily about a misunderstanding with "Master Abū

(316) A certain Şemaḥ, writing from Palermo in about 1055, announces that he had loaded goods on a ship owned by Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ, and asks Nehorai b. Nissim to load the goods which he intends to ship to Sicily on the same ship. In the same letter, Şemaḥ mentions Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs “big ship”—which implies that he also had a smaller ship (or perhaps several smaller ships). In a letter from Labrāṭ b. Moses ibn Sughmār, sent from Mahdiyya, apparently on 9 January 1058, to his brother Judah, we find the first mention of a special relationship between Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ and Zakkār b. ʿAmmār, called *madīnī* (“of the city”, that is, Palermo). Labrāṭ mentions this in reports on goods sent to Sicily, according to a letter received by Zakkār’s brother Ḥayyim. He states that six loads sent by Judah from Egypt to Sicily had arrived, as well as one other load whose owner was unknown; it was marked “Ibn Mūsā”, and no one knew whether it belonged to the addressee (Judah b. Moses) or to Ḥasūn b. Mūsā. All of the loads had therefore been sequestered and left in a warehouse. The one handling the matter was Master Abū ʿAbdallah, in whose ship the loads had arrived. In order to get the loads released, Abū ʿAbdallah required copies of the receipts as well as a deposit in the event of complaints. The writer (Labrāṭ) had already organized all that was necessary, and had had the copies signed by a *faqīh* (a Muslim specialist in law) and other Muslim notables from Mahdiyya and Qayrawān (the people of Qayrawān had moved to Mahdiyya when their city was destroyed). In Labrāṭ’s opinion, everything had already been settled, because it is Zakkār b. ʿAmmār who deals with this matter on the Palermo end and had been ill, had meanwhile recovered.

ʿAbdallah” concerning a missing load of flax; however, the latter compensated the owner of the lost merchandise; he notes that Abū Saʿīd Maymūn b. Jacob was traveling in his ship from Sicily to Egypt, and he also mentions Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs brother, who was traveling to Egypt in the ship belonging to ‘al-Sayyida’: 576, a, l. 6; b, ll. 3, 8. In early 1057, Abraham b. Farrāḥ writes that the people of Fustat were expecting the arrival of Abū ʿAbdallah ibn al-Baʿbāʿ: 771, b, l. 13. At about the same time, Joseph b. ʿAlī Kohen Fāsi writes of his intention to come to Fustat and meet with “Master Abū ʿAbdallah”, to see if he had kept his goods safe for him, and asks to send him his greetings: 400, a, l. 14. And Mūsā b. Abīʿl-Ḥayy, reviewing shipping traffic, lists Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs ship among those which had not yet returned to Alexandria: 448, a, margin, top, ff. In about 1060, an unidentified writer states that Ibn ʿAbd al-Rahmān was carrying a pouch full of dirhams: 817, a, l. 10. Judah b. Ismaʿīl al-Andalusī writes at about the same time from Sicily to Nissim b. ʿAyyāsh and mentions goods sent from there—shelled almonds and *lāsīn* silk—in Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs ship: 577, a, ll. 9-10. Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, writing from Mahdiyya on 2 February 1063, mentions Abū Ibrahim (=Isaac) b. Khalaf, who had written to tell him that he had sent a pouch containing 500 *rubāʿiyya* (quarter-dinars) in Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs ship: 372, a, ll. 10-11. Zechariah b. Jacob b. al-Shāma, writing an accounting list from Tripoli in Libya in late 1065, mentions a load belonging to Joseph b. Ibrahim the *dayyān*, transported by Master Abū ʿAbdallah: 669, b, l. 39. “The distinguished Master Abū ʿAbdallah, may God perpetuate his greatness”, came to visit Abraham b. Farrāḥ, in Alexandria, as noted in a letter written by Abraham himself in 1066: 557, a, margin. On the shipping of goods from Spain, see Ismaʿīl b. Farah’s letter from Alexandria, dating from 6 November 1056: 494, a, l. 8: the ship of al-Andalusī arrived from al-Mariyya. The *sufṭaja*, see 544, where there is on the recto a letter to Nehorai b. Nissim, in which Abraham b. Farrāḥ mentions the *sufṭaja*. On the verso, there is the *sufṭaja* itself, in a square frame: *sufṭaja mablaghuhā arbaʿin dīn ... niṣṭuhā ʿishrīn dīn sawā* (“...its amount is 40 dinars, the half of which is exactly 20 dinars”): Note that it was customary to mention the half of the amount, in order to avoid errors and misunderstandings—similarly to the way in which sums on today’s cheques are written in both figures and words.

At about the same time, Joseph b. ʿAlī Kohen Fāsī writes that he intends to come to Fustat, to meet with Master Abū ʿAbdallah, to see if he kept his merchandise for him; and he asks to convey his greetings to him.

Several years later, perhaps in 1061, an accounting list drawn up by Nehorai b. Nissim mentions a load dispatched in Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs old ship; a reference made there to "the master's new ship" apparently also relates to Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ. Salāma b. Mūsā, writing from Māzar to Judah b. Moses b. Sughmār on 7 September 1064, informs him *inter alia* of a shipment of oil in a ship owned by Ibn al-Mayn, "which used to belong to Master Abū ʿAbdallah". This may indicate the beginning of Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs retirement from the shipping business in favour of a political carrier.

Mevasser b. David, writing from Tinnīs to Nehorai b. Nissim on 25 August 1068: "I have been informed that my Lord and Master Abū ʿAbdallah Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ came to Alexandria in a *ghurāb* (riverboat), and I do not know if he was running for his life or (just) traveling". This almost definitely attests to Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs escape from Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz (the abovementioned affair of Bijāya and al-Nāsir b. Ḥammād); this and subsequent references (see below) completely refute his alleged execution as cited in the Arab source listed above.

On 4 May 1069, Farah b. Joseph al-Qābisī writes from Alexandria to Judah b. Manasseh in Fustat: "Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ is its (Palermo's) *sulṭān*... he killed the Sicilian commanders (*quwwād*), and defeated the enemy". A passage is missing here, which probably stated that the Muslims had previously suffered a defeat at the hands of the Normans; what follows is: "...defeated the Muslims (Hebrew:) with a great death". Immediately following: "and he appointed Zakkār b. ʿAmmār as *nagid* over the Jews"; after another missing passage, we find the word *riyāsa* ('authority'); yet another missing passage is followed by: "for he (i.e. Zakkār) is also in charge of supplying most of the provisions of Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ". Further details originally given have been lost, except for the mention of a deal involving "wheat and honey and hides by al-Fāsī" (who may have been Joseph b. ʿAlī Kohen Fāsī, Nehorai b. Nissim's brother-in-law). Eight days later, also writing from Alexandria, the same Farah b. Joseph makes similar statements in a letter to the same Judah b. Manasseh, in which we find the following: "Letter-bearers arrived from the Maghrib, one day before the boats set sail, and said concerning Sicily (or: concerning Palermo) that Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ is the *sulṭān*, and that he defeated the *rūmī*; afterward the *rūmī* came back and defeated them and killed a lot of their people; and the Arabs have already entered; and that he appointed Zakkār b. ʿAmmār as *nagid* over the Jews, and he (i.e., Zakkār) has an enormous guard, and slaves, and courtiers, because he also deals with the goods of the *sulṭān*, may God grant him even more". This is a repetition of things mentioned in the previous letter—that is, that Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ, the shipping magnate who became a politician and a general, now headed the Muslim section of the island; that there were ups and downs in the battles against the Normans, and they seem to have held Palermo for some time, but the Muslims had now returned to it ("and the Arabs [i.e. the Bedouin] have already entered"); and that Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ had appointed Zakkār b. ʿAmmār as the leader of the Jews, and the same Zakkār (who had previously cooperated with Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ in matters of

trade and shipping) was also in charge of supplies to Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c and his army.

To conclude this final episode: we have thus learned from the Geniza letters that Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, known as Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c, fought against the Normans during the last years of Muslim rule in Sicily. Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c made his fortune in shipping, as a shipowner carrying cargo to and from Sicily. He enjoyed a special relationship with the Jewish merchants of the Maghrib and earned their trust. His family originally came from Spain (al-Andalusī); his grandfather was a goldsmith (al-Ṣāʿigh), and perhaps a Jewish convert to Islam. From Ibn al-Athīr, we find that Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c had a severe falling-out with the ruler of Ifrīqiya, Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz, and that he even conspired against him with his enemy, al-Nāṣir b. Ḥammād. However, he escaped Tamīm's wrath and fled to Egypt, despite Ibn al-Athīr's (false) report of his death. In the account of Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, it is implied that he reached an agreement with the rulers of Egypt, empowering him to go to Sicily and fight against the sons of Tamīm and their army, forcing them to abandon the island. He then became the ruler of Palermo, apparently with the blessing of the Egyptians, being a loyal follower of the Fatimids, but he was obligated to pay tribute to them. At this point, the Maghribi Jewish merchants cooperated with him, and may even have financed him—and probably had great expectations of him. According to Sibṭ, it was he who turned over Palermo to the Normans, as he was incapable of making the required payments to Egypt. But when the Normans entered Palermo, they put him to death. Palermo fell into Norman hands on 10 January 1072, after a five months' siege; Māzar surrendered immediately thereafter, thus ending the period of Muslim rule in Sicily.³¹⁶

³¹⁶ Ṣemah: 789, a, l. 19; b, l. 7. Labrāt: 617, a, ll. 44ff. Joseph b. ʿAlī: 400, a, ll. 14ff.; Nehorai: 294, I, l. 13; II, l. 4; IV, l. 1. Salāma: 751, a, l. 35. Mevasser: 695, b, l. 7. Farah b. Joseph: 519, b, ll. 5-8; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 25, 525, n. 11, who read Ibn al-Na^cnā^c instead of Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c, and believed the reference to have been to Ayyūb b. Tamīm; so, following that interpretation, writes Gil, *Italia Jud.*, I, 96. However, the name Ibn al-Na^cnā^c is not found in any Arab sources, and there can be no doubt that the correct reading in this case is Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c. The other letter by Joseph b. Farah: 520, a, margin, top, and continued onto b. In that letter, the writing of the name Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c is quite clear. For the appointment of Zakkār b. ʿAmmār, and the title of *nagid*, see Gil, *Hist.*, 590, in note 82. Concerning the end of Muslim rule in Palermo, see Amari, *Storia*, III, 126ff.; see the discussion regarding that date on p. 127, n. 2 of that work, and also on pp. 132-133, n. 4, and p. 133, n. 1 (the latter note also discusses the conflicting dates mentioned in the Arab sources). According to Amari, *Storia*, III, 113, after the departure of the Maghribis from Palermo, that city came under the rule of the local Muslim council, the *jamāʿa*. The more authentic *shūrā* is found in a Geniza letter, as we have seen above.

CHAPTER TWO

SICILY'S ECONOMY AND THE JEWISH MERCHANTS

1. *Sicily's geographic position and its economy*

(317) Sicily, being close to the African continent, was easily able to maintain maritime contact with Africa. As Ifrīqiya developed into the trade centre of the Mediterranean basin, especially under the Fatimids—to a great degree thanks to its Jewish merchants—the island became an important target area for the exchange of merchandise. The Maghrib was in great need of supplies from Sicily, especially of Sicilian wheat, but also of fruit and other goods. When the Fatimids expanded their rule, starting from 969, and took over Egypt, a triangular connection—Sicily-Maghrib-Egypt—was established.

This situation is well reflected in the merchants' letters to be found in the Geniza. The ships which carried cargo from Egypt would sail first to Sicily, and from there to Ifrīqiya. Nehorai b. Nissim, writing to another, unidentified merchant about the sale of an amphora containing camphor water, writes *inter alia*: "...If... the ships have already left the port, find me a way to send it to Sicily, as our people only set sail to there, and from there to Qayrawān...". In about 1053, Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī writes to his cousin Nehorai, from Sicily. At the time of writing, he was in the port of Itrabanish (Trapani), in the month of Elul (August-September), after having spent the entire winter and summer (so we gather) in Tripoli (Libya) and in Sicily. His family remained in the Maghrib, in Mahdiyya. He reports having received "a letter from my brother (Joseph, in Mahdiyya), that he will receive woven fabrics, and silk, and dresses (made in the Maghrib), so that he can send them (i.e. to Palermo) and I will send them to you".

In the summertime—generally the only season when sailings were relatively safe—shipping traffic in and out of Sicily reached considerable proportions; merchants' letters include long lists of ships passing through the area. For example, let us consider a letter written by ʿAyyāsh b. Ṣedāqā in Fustat to Nehorai b. Nissim in Būṣīr in about 1054. ʿAyyāsh reports on the arrival of three ships in Alexandria: "and they said that they had left six ships to be loaded (in Palermo), and that they (i.e. their captains) were in a hurry". Sicily was apparently a thriving and dynamic center of economic activity, and craved imported goods, as we shall see later. Some merchants preferred to flood the Sicilian market with goods originally scheduled for shipment to Egypt or the Maghrib—as attested, for example, by the abovementioned ʿAyyāsh in a letter to Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī. After mentioning the vast amounts of merchandise which he and his partners had purchased, he discusses the possibilities of marketing these goods, and

notes that “the people would like, perhaps (i.e. would prefer), through Sicily”.

The Mediterranean Sea routes to and from Sicily were teeming with maritime traffic. In this connection, let us remember that a voyage from Sicily to Egypt took no small number of days. A ship owned by Ibn Mujāhid set sail from Māzar on 23 July (1062) and reached Alexandria on 9 August—that is, 17 days later. Moreover, winds blowing in unfavourable directions could considerably lengthen the voyage. East winds, according to a letter written by Ismaʿīl b. Farah on 6 November 1056, caused a sailing from Palermo to Alexandria to last for 50 days! That same letter notes that among the ships which had recently reached Māzar were some ships from Lādhīqiyya, which had set out, unusually enough, after *ʿid al-ṣalīb* (“the feast of the cross”)—i.e. during the second half of September—and had arrived 20 days after that feast, on 4 October. Abraham b. Farrāh, writing from Alexandria in about 1055, mentions that a ship arrived from Palermo 20 days after setting out. Some people would use small, fast boats, to shorten the duration of the journey; boats of the *khayfī* and *khinzīra* varieties seem to have been mainly propelled by rowers, and were therefore less dependent on wind direction. Joseph b. Farah, also writing from Alexandria in about 1055, notes: “A *khayfī* set sail from here, carrying people from Sicily, to catch up with the ship”. Below, in my more concrete descriptions of the island’s economy and the activity of the Maghribi Jewish merchants therein, most of the information is related to shipping traffic, as the ships were the vital artery in the economy of the entire Mediterranean area. Many of the descriptive passages in the merchants’ letters refer to matters happening in the ports.³¹⁷

2. Local production and export

(318) Sicily was considered a naturally rich location. This is attested to by both Muqaddasī (late tenth century) and Yāqūt (early thirteenth century). Its volcano Etna was a source of ammonia, which was exported to Spain and Egypt—although Muqaddasī mentions that the production of ammonia had ceased, and that the Egyptians had begun to use soot from bath-houses instead. The island also manufactured top-quality finished fabrics (the term ‘finished’ is an approximate translation of *al-maqṣūra*, “washed and shrunk”; the reference is to flaxen cloth). Among the metals and minerals produced there were gold, silver, copper, lead, mercury, alum, antimony, iron and sulfuric acid. A constant supply of all kinds of fruits came from the island, in both summer and winter; also grown there was saffron. Al-Bakrī also notes the production of sulfur in the volcanic area, and that of petroleum (*zayt al-naftī*) near Syracuse.

³¹⁷ Nehorai: 243, a, ll. 12-13; Barhūn, 344, a, ll. 5-6. ʿAyyāsh: 479, a, ll. 22-23; 481, l. 13. In 476 (August 1045), he announces that two ships had reached Alexandria from Palermo. The ship of b. Mujāhid: 312, a, l. 8 (Yeshūʿa b. Ismaʿīl writes from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim). Ismaʿīl b. Farah: 494, b, l. 6; in 496 (about 1060), he announces that a *khinzīra* had reached Alexandria from Palermo. Abraham b. Farrāh: 551, a, l. 5 (the *qārib* of ʿUthmān al-Lakkī). Joseph b. Farah: 512, b, l. 8; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, p. 474, n. 8.

A more accurate and detailed picture can be had from the Maghribi merchants' letters in the Geniza. Heading the list of local production we find the various kinds of textiles, and especially silk. The responsa of the geonim already note that Sicily was a prime location for the production of silk: "Reuben sent with Simon silk from the islands (!) of Siqilliyya" is the heading of one responsum (whose query and answer have unfortunately not come down to us). Mentioned in the letters are various quantities of silk—sometimes in *qinṭārs* (hundreds of *raṭls*), and often in *raṭls*. A special type of cheap silk unique to Sicily, *lāsīn*, is often mentioned. Raw silk, *ḥarīr*, is mentioned frequently, as is silken cloth, *dībāj*. Silk was also marketed in cocoons; this was the *jīzī* silk.

Contrary to an assumption of earlier research, it was not the Normans who first brought silk production to Sicily; we find mentions of silk imports from Sicily as early as the responsa of the geonim and in Geniza letters from the early eleventh century. Amari already hypothesized that the silk industry in Sicily began much earlier. In about 1025, we find information on large shipments of silk from Sicily to Egypt, in a letter from Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī to Benjamin b. Joseph ibn ʿAwkal. Joseph b. Samuel al-Danī, writing from Palermo at about the same time, to his partner (and perhaps relative) Abū Ibrāhīm Ismaʿīl b. Abraham, mentions that he shipped ten *raṭls* of silk, which should have brought in ten dinars, as payment of the *me'ūḥār* (bride-price) for his divorced wife who had stayed in Egypt. A letter from Ḥasūn b. Isaac al-Khawlanī to Ibn ʿAwkal, also written in the early eleventh century, quite probably from Alexandria, notes inter alia silk, apparently from Sicily, packed into a shipment of hides, to preserve the quality of the silk.³¹⁸

(319) Clothing and fabrics, as well as coats, made in Sicily were also very desirable merchandise. Often mentioned is the term *thawb*, which may refer to a type of fabric or to a garment. The Sicilians seem to have been particularly skilled at manufacturing expensive garments and fabrics, and also at embroidery (*ṭirāz*); Ibn Ḥawqal (who stayed in Palermo during the summer of 973) mentions that Palermo had a special market for *ṭirāz* work;

³¹⁸ Muqaddasī, *Āqālīm*, 239; Yāqūt, III, 407f.; Al-Bakrī, *Masālik*, 215f. The heading of a query and the Gaon's responsum: Ginzberg, *Geonica*, II, 65. See Amari, *Storia*, III, 441. According to the once most commonly accepted assumption, it was Roger II who first brought the Jewish silk production experts as prisoners from the Greek islands to Sicily, in 1147; see Annales Cavenses, *MGH*, SS, III, 194 (Cava, near Salerno); see also Otto of Freising, *ibid.*, XX, 370; cf. Starr, *Jews*, no. 173 (p. 211), and also Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 102f.; 455. Al-Majjānī, see 118, a, ll. 11ff. Joseph b. Samuel: 173, ll. 11ff; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 222. Concerning *jīzī* silk, see 561, a, l. 9; 562, a, l. 18; cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, 455; see also in Dozy, *Suppl. jīz*. See also 380, a, l. 33 and margin, right; b, ll. 16; 25-27; 651, b, l. 20 (silk in *qinṭārs*). Ḥasūn b. Isaac: 218, a, ll. 8-11; cf. Stillman, *JESHO*, 16 (1973), 74; 251, a, l. 12 (silk sent from Sicily, about 1053); 281 (as above, about 1058); 292 (shipping certificate: *dībāj*, *ḥarīr*, *ḥarīr manqūd* (separated silk), *lāsīn*—in a shipment from Sicily organized by Nehorai b. Nissim): 349; a, l. 14 (*lāsīn* silk is manufactured in Sicily). 484, b (summer 1050; *lāsīn* from Sicily). 577 (about 1060; a shipment of *lāsīn* from Sicily). 656 (a Sicilian, David b. ʿAmmār Madīnī, asks Nehorai to arrange with Judah b. Moses b. Sughmār the accounting for the *ḥarīr* sent from Sicily; about 1065). 749, a, l. 6 (kinds of *ḥarīr*: *muṣallab* [apparently a mixture with flaxen threads], *maṭṭūl* [twisted]; summer 1062). 789, a, ll. 19 ff. (about 1055: sheets of silk cloth, *lāsīn*, twisted silk, silk in cocoons; each sheet of silk is separated from the next by *ruḳʿa kāghid bayāḍ*, a sheet of white paper). 832 (about 1050); a high volume of trade in silk from Sicily, including *ḥarīr* from Demone—*dimunishī*.

sūq al-tarrāzīn. Barhūn b. Šālīḥ al-Tāhīrtī and Nehorai b. Nissim both ask their cousin Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī to buy them, from the goods scheduled to arrive in Alexandria on board ships from Sicily, cloth and garments, so that they would have what to wear on weekdays. Garments from Tustar, renowned throughout the area, were copied in Sicily; Judah b. Ismaʿīl al-Andalusī, writing from Sicily on 9 August 1062 to Nehorai b. Nissim, notes that 30 *tustarī* garments had been shipped from the island. Nehorai b. Nissim, visiting Māzar in about 1053, notes in a letter that he sent from there, inter alia, a parcel full of coats and shawls. Sicilian products especially in demand included carpets, towels, and turbans (*ʿamāʿim*). Faraḥ b. Ismaʿīl, writing from Alexandria to Fustat on 19 November 1050, asks his father to get him two Sicilian turbans; similar requests may be found in other letters. Also interested in *ʿamāʿim siqillī* was Faraḥ b. Joseph; he asks for them in two letters to Khalaf b. Sahl, in approximately 1056, as well as in a letter to another merchant whose name has not come down to us.³¹⁹

(320) The Maghrib imported wheat from Sicily on a regular basis; the rulers of Ifrīqiya required that wheat to feed the country's population. The extent of wheat-growing on the island is also evidenced by the fact that Palermo had a special market for wheat, *sūq al-qamḥ*. Khallūf b. Zakariyya, writing from Alexandria to Joseph b. Jacob ibn ʿAwkal on 1 October 1030, reviews maritime traffic from Sicily, mentioning inter alia two ships still docked in Palermo and loaded with wheat, "may God bless them with a safe passage"; indeed, anyone desiring to sail from Sicily to Alexandria in October was in need of God's mercy. Labrāṭ b. Moses ibn Sughmār, writing from Mahdiyya to Nehorai b. Nissim on 4 August 1057, mentions that the Norman invasion was liable to raise the price of wheat, as "this country" (i.e. Ifrīqiya, the Maghrib) depended on Sicily for its wheat supply. Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār, writing from Palermo to Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī in about 1069, notes that he had sent 30 *mudds* of wheat in a ship owned by Sūdān, and another 45 *mudds* in a ship belonging to Niʿmat Allah—that is, more than 60 kgs of wheat all told. Al-Māzari, an eleventh-century Muslim jurist of Sicilian origin (as his name shows), also mentions shipments of wheat from Sicily to Mahdiyya. Other goods brought from Sicily included oil, wax, wine and cheese. A small ship is said to have arrived from Palermo bearing 30 cheeses (*jubn*: 30 *rābas*; the term *rāba* apparently derives from the root *rwb*, which relates to the souring of milk).

³¹⁹ Ibn Hawkal, 119; for his stay in Palermo, see p. 128 of his book. Barhūn b. Šālīḥ: 333, a, ll. 29ff. (about 1056). Judah b. Ismaʿīl: 578, a, l. 6; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 50, who believes that the reference was to Spain or North Africa, but in my opinion there can scarcely be any doubt that Sicily is meant. See also 576, a, l. 9—Jacob b. Ismaʿīl, writing from Palermo, expresses hope that Nehorai b. Nissim had already sold the *al-dustarī*. Joseph and Nahum, sons of Sahl al-Baradānī, writing from Tyre in about 1060, ask whether a shipment of fabrics for the manufacture of garments had arrived from Sicily for them in Egypt, and request that Nehorai transfer that shipment to Tyre; see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 204f. (no. 492). Nehorai: 251, b, ll. 2-3. See also: 264, b, l. 2: Nehorai is waiting for goods due to arrive from Sicily; 292, a shipping certificate for goods which Nehorai sent from Sicily, mentioning *sūsī* fabric (perhaps an imitation of fabric made in Sūsa in the Maghrib), *muthallath*, sheets of cloth, garments, carpets, towels. See also 453, a, margin, top; Nissim b. ʿAṭīyya of Mahdiyya had arrived in Alexandria from Māzar and had brought with him goods including fabrics from Sicily. Faraḥ b. Ismaʿīl: 501, a, l. 32; Faraḥ b. Joseph: 517, a, l. 16; 518, a, l. 15; 522, a, l. 15.

Among the fruits mentioned by Yāqūt as being abundant in Sicily, the merchants' letters contain information on shipments of almonds: Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī bought two loads of shelled almonds in Syracuse (in about 1056). Also active in the almond trade were the brothers Jacob and Judah b. Isma'īl, Spanish Jews who had settled in Sicily. One of them, in two letters, mentions a shipment of 25 *raṭls* of shelled almonds; the other notes that he used the money obtained from the sale of a shipment of pepper to buy 10 *qintārs* of shelled almonds (nearly half a ton!).

A typical product exported from Sicily was hides, or *naḥ* (plural: *anḥā'*). The Arabic term is sometimes also used to mean 'packaging'—apparently with the connotation of leather sacks. The purchase of hides in Sicily is mentioned in an accounting list sent to Joseph ibn 'Awkal in the early eleventh century, concerning imports and exports in Sicily. In 1015, Ḥasūn b. Isaac al-Khawlanī informs Joseph ibn 'Awkal that he was about to receive a shipment of hides from Sicily. In a letter written from Māzar by Nehorai b. Nissim, the hides are called *jild*; this term (which often recurs in the merchants' letters) may refer to untanned hides. Mūsā b. Ishāq b. Ḥisdā, acting on behalf of Joseph ibn 'Awkal, carried hides from Sicily at a value of 132 dinars (apparently *rubā'iyya*, quarter-dinars), including some hides from Syracuse (*naḥ c siraqūstī*).³²⁰

(321) Another typical export product was lead. Generally speaking, the mere mention of lead in a letter of unknown origin is a probable sign that the letter originated in Sicily. Muqaddasī in the tenth century, al-Bakrī in the eleventh century, Yāqūt in the thirteenth century, all mention the export of lead from Sicily. The lead was carried in large double sacks called *kharj* (also: *kharjayn*). Maymūn b. Khalfa, writing from Palermo on 18 August 1056, informs Nehorai that he had sent 31 parcels (*qit' a*) of lead, each weighing some 160 kgs, in a ship (*qārib*) belonging to the vizier. Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, in an accounting list referring to merchandise bought by him in Syracuse, notes the purchase of 238 *jild dhahab*; the reference, apparently, is to gold sheets. A letter written by an anonymous merchant in about 1050 mentions the export of copper. Also manufactured or produced on the island were antimony (*kuḥl*), lacquer, soap, and alum. Import of antimony from Sicily is mentioned by Mūsā b. Yaḥyā al-Majjānī in a letter to Benjamin b. Joseph ibn 'Awkal, written in about 1025. Lacquer brought from Sicily appears in an accounting list drawn up by Nehorai b. Nissim in about 1058: "40 *raṭls* of lacquer, (weighed) with the

³²⁰ Concerning the dependence of the Maghrib on Sicilian wheat, see Amari, *Storia*, III, 95, n. 3. The wheat market: Ibn Ḥawkal, 119. Khallūf b. Zakariyya: 194, a, ll. 22-24. Labrāt b. Moses: 616, margin. Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār: 654, a, ll. 11, 13. Wheat from Sicily is also mentioned in 519, b, l. 8. See the statement by al-Māzarī in Idris, *JESHO*, 4 (1961), p. 235. Al-Māzarī is the *imām* Abū 'Abdallah Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Umar al-Tamīmī, who wrote: *al-miḡwal wa'l-qawl* ('eloquence and the word'); he died in 1 Rabī' 536, October 1141; see Ibn Khallikān, IV, 285. Shipments of oil from Sicily: 453, b, l. 1. See also 549, a, l. 11: Zak-kār b. 'Ammār sent 11 amphorae of oil from Sicily, and Abraham b. Farrāh complains about the quality of the amphorae. Wax: Mūsā b. Ishāq b. Ḥisdā writes to Joseph b. Jacob ibn 'Awkal (early eleventh century) about shipments of wax from Sicily: 190, a, l. 5, and margin: he had already sent one crate, and bought another six *qintārs* (about 270 kgs). Wine: Nehorai b. Nissim mentions old wine (*mu'attaq*): 251, b, l. 3. Cheese: 194, a, ll. 12-22. Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl: 325, a, l. 5. Jacob b. Isma'īl: 574, b, l. 10; 575, b, ll. 2-3. Judah b. Isma'īl: 577, a, l. 8. The accounting list to Joseph ibn 'Awkal: 201, a, l. 4; 218, l. 9. Nehorai: 251, a, l. 6. See also the shipping certificate from Sicily: 592, l. 5. Mūsā b. Ishāq: 190, a, ll. 3-8.

Palermo *raṭṭ*". °Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā asks his partner to get him 50 sacks of soap from Sicily (or so we understand) in the summer of 1050. As for alum (*shabb*), it is mentioned in a letter written by a Sicilian who apparently fled the island, perhaps, in the early eleventh century; he writes of seven *qinṭārs* of *shabb kawārī*, worth 70 quarter-dinars, which were pledged as surety against a debt. According to Yāqūt, the alum was produced in mines in Sicily. Let us recall that Sicily was also a supplier of wood for the building trade, and especially for shipbuilding—as I have mentioned with regard to the conquest of Taormina and Rametta (above, sec. 310).³²¹

3. The imports

(322) Whereas, on one hand, Sicily was an important supplier of raw materials and products, on the other, it provided an extensive and popular market for imported goods. The Maghribi Jewish merchants seem to have been heavily involved in supplying materials and products to the island. We find several letters containing impressively detailed listings of various kinds of merchandise. Nehorai b. Nissim mentions having imported the following kinds of goods to Sicily: flax, ammonia, sugar, resin, frankincense, galanga (*khawlān*), brazilwood (*baqam*). Joseph b. Khalfa, writing from Qayrawān in about 1050, lists goods in demand in Sicily, especially various spices: "...Palermo, for there is a demand there: pepper, 150 quarter-dinars a *qinṭār*; brazilwood (*baqam*), 90 quarter-dinars; sarcocolla (°*anzarūt*) you must bring, for it is in short supply. Of the good lapis lazuli (*lazward*), bring 20 *manns*, as a partnership between me and you... And bring a bundle of frankincense and a bundle and a sack of asa foetida and senna (*simma*)... and 10 *raṭṭs* of green zinc (*tūtiya*), and a quarter-*qinṭār* of borax (*tinkār*), and galanga (*khawlanjān*)... And cinnamon (*qirfa*), the red is in demand... camphor... ammonia, two *manns* for a dinar. Cardamom (*qāqila*)... nut essence (*darkisā*), 100 quarter-dinars a *mann*; bamboo crystals (*tabāshīr*)... 3 dinars a *mann*; and bring me 20 *raṭṭs*, in a basket, of galanga (*khawlān*)... everlasting (*shayān*), 4 *raṭṭs* for a dinar; powdered mercury (*tarbid*), bring some of it... And come only to Palermo ...". Later in the letter, he mentions cloves (*qaranful*) and sandalwood (*sandal*).

Some of the Geniza documents concerning Sicily refer to an incident involving trade with Sicily, which was adjudicated by the Palestinian Gaon, Daniel b. °Azariah, in 1058, and which apparently took place several years previously. Moses b. Judah ha-Ḥazzān al-Maghribi, who settled in Sicily, took it upon himself to transport goods from Egypt to Sicily and sell them there; however, he fell ill and died on the way, and his body was cast into the sea. Among the goods were indigo, bamboo crystals (*tabāshīr*); aloe,

³²¹ Muqaddasī, *Āqālīm*, 239; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 407. Transport in *kharj*: 832, a, ll. 12, 31. Maymūn: 561, a, margin, top. The weight of a *qitʿa* of lead may be calculated based on 209, a, which mentions 19 *qitʿas* of lead having a total weight of 69 *qinṭārs*, or about 160 kgs per *qitʿa*—heavy merchandise indeed! Gold: 325, a, l. 13. Copper: 832, a, l. 9. Antimony: 118, a, margin, top. Lacquer: 281, ll. 4, 13. °Ayyāsh: 484, b, ll. 20, 21. Alum: 238, a, margin. That type of alum was apparently named for Kawār, an area of oases in the southern Sahara; cf. Lombard, *Textiles*, 149.

sweet resin, Indian myrobalan, saffron, cinnamon, myrrh, yellow myrobalan, cardamom (*hāl*), camphor water, cassia gourd (*khiyār shanbar*). The commercial center of Palermo, where imported goods were concentrated, was in the *funduq* of al-Samanṭārī, which is mentioned in some of the merchants' letters and will be mentioned below as well.

The most important type of merchandise imported to Sicily was flax, which was the principal raw material used in making the fabrics and garments for which the island was renowned. Salāma b. Joseph al-Ghazzāl, writing from Qayrawān to Joseph ibn ʿAwkal in about 1030, notes that he had waited until Purim, "but when he saw that the market in Qayrawān remained quiescent, he decided to transport the flax to Palermo, and there the sale went well, especially as it was done by *al-qism wa'l-rizq* ('according to the profit to be granted by God')". In an accounting list drawn up by an anonymous merchant, referring to the years 1034 and 1035, we find that he sent six loads (*aḥmāl*) of flax, in two ships, to Palermo. Dūnash b. Isaac, writing at about the same time, also notes that, by contrast to other merchants seeking to anchor in Tripoli (Libya), he preferred to continue to Palermo, as he was carrying flax and had heard that the market there was good. At times, however, the opposite was true. Salāma b. Mūsā complains, in a letter written in Māzar on 7 September 1064, that on his arrival in Palermo on Rosh Hashana, he had found that his cargo of flax could not be marketed. The price of flax had been 70 (apparently 70 quarter-dinars per *qinṭār*) the previous winter, but now (in late summer, the end of the sailing season, when almost all the ships had already reached their destination), it had dropped to 40. In a letter written on 1 October 1030, Khallūf b. Zakariyya warns that there was no market in Palermo for *mīsārī* flax.

Also important to the textile industry were the shipments of indigo, which was the most popular dyeing material at the time. Among the most important suppliers of indigo were the Dead Sea and Jordan Valley area, where the Maghribi merchants used to purchase indigo (*nīl*) and *wasma* seeds (*wasma* being another type of indigo). Especially large shipments of indigo to Sicily are mentioned in a memorandum drawn up in the *bēt dīn* of Nathan b. Abraham in Fustat in 1040. In a letter sent from Sicily in the early eleventh century, apparently to Joseph b. Jacob ibn ʿAwkal, we find a complaint concerning the condition of an indigo shipment, which had reached the island in an extremely poor state, and could not be sold in the *sūq al-ʿaṭṭārīn* in Palermo for any more than about one quarter-dinar per *raṭl*.

A certain Abū Saʿīd writes from Sicily in about 1060 to his brother Abū'l-Barakāt in Fustat, proposing that the brother move from Egypt to Palermo, as the latter city had a good market for spices imported from the East, and the two could work together in that business. Large deals in various perfumes are revealed in documents already discussed above, in the incident adjudicated by Daniel b. ʿAzariah. A shipment of ammonia from Egypt to Sicily is mentioned in about 1050. I have already noted Muqaddasī's description of the production of ammonia from the volcano on the island; that production, he says, had ceased—and indeed, two or three generations later, we find that ammonia is imported by Sicily from Egypt. Although Sicily was a producer of oil, we find details of a large shipment

of oil to the island in 1040: some two tons of oil bought in Mahdiyya were sent to Palermo. Also worthy of listing are shipments of sugar, soap, and pearls.³²²

4. Coins and measures

(323) It has been noted, as early as Amari's time, that the most prevalent coin in Sicily was the *rubāʿī*, or quarter-dinar (plural: *rubāʿīyya*). The coin was also called *ṭarī*, a term which appears in the Latin sources of the period as *tarenī*. Spahr, in his survey of coins in Sicily, cites translations of Arabic inscriptions on 41 Fatimid coins in Sicily, starting in 948/9 (al-Manṣūr) and ending in 1063/4 (al-Mustanṣir, also known as Maʿadd Abū Tamīm); almost all these coins were *rubāʿīyya*. Typical is the fact that some of the quarter-dinars minted in 1038-1041 bear neither the name of the caliph nor that of ʿAlī (ibn Abī Tālib, which is customarily inscribed on Fatimid coins). Some scholars have already expressed the hypothesis that these coins were minted during the reign of Aḥmad b. Yūsuf (al-Aḫḫal), or that of ʿAbdallah b. al-Muʿizz (the ruler of Ifrīqiya), sent by his father al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs to Sicily in 1036, at the head of an army. The latter possibility is more likely, as it is only natural that a Sunni ruler would be the one to eliminate the mention of ʿAlī—and of course that of the Fatimid caliph—on coins.

Later coins again mention the name of the Egyptian caliph; these may be assumed to have been minted after the ascension of al-Ḥasan b. Yūsuf, or Ṣamṣām al-dawla, who—as explained above—was loyal to Egypt. Ibn al-Thumna also expressed this loyalty, as the name of al-Mustanṣir appears on coins minted up to 456 (1063/4), when the Palermo mint apparently stopped functioning. Also found in Sicily, dating from al-Mustanṣir's day, were quarter-dinars whose inscriptions took the form of a six-pointed star; these are referred to in a Hebrew letter from the Geniza as *darkemōnīm kokhbayē* ('starlike'). The term *ṭarī* has the same meaning in Arabic and Hebrew ("fresh, new"), and may have originated with a new minting of quarter-dinars. In the Geniza letters, this term appears throughout the eleventh century, from its beginning. The circulation of quarter-dinars in Sicily was so extensive that some of these letters use the terms *rubāʿī*, *rubāʿīyya* to refer to money in general.

³²² Nehorai: 251, a. Joseph b. Khalfa: 562, a, ll. 6 ff. Moses b. Judah: in Gil, *Palest.*, II, pp. 721-732 (nos. 394, 395, 396): Concerning the *funduq*, see e.g. 651, a, ll. 21 ff.—problematic goods are brought to the *funduq*; there they open goods which became wet during transport by sea, in order to dry them. Salāma: 176, a, ll. 8-13. Accounting list: 136, a, l. 11. Dīnash b. Isaac: 204, a, ll. 15-17. Salāma: 751, a, l. 21. Khallūf: 194, l. 26. Concerning the marketing of flax in Sicily, see also e.g. 190, a, l. 9; 251, a, margin, top (prices are dropping). Memorandum: in Gil, *Palest.*, II, 336-338 (no. 193). Purchase of indigo (in Ṣoʿar): *ibid.*, III, 253 (no. 503, a, ll. 14-15): the letter from Sicily: 201, a, ll. 23-27, including additional details on indigo shipments which reached Sicily. Abū Saʿīd: 830, a, l. 25. The perfume trade and the matter of Moses b. Judah: see above in this note. Ammonia: 575, a, l. 8. A shipment of ammonia is also mentioned in 1062; see 578, a, l. 10. See also 251, a, l. 14. Oil to Palermo: see Gil, *Hist.*, 237, n. 11; *idem*, *Palest.*, II, 338 (no. 193, a, ll. 16, 20-21). Sugar: 251, b, l. 7. Soap: 363, b, l. 8. Pearls: 575, a, l. 22; b, l. 1 (*mirjān*); 578, a, ll. 7, 10; b, ll. 1, 2 (*lu'lu'*).

The Maghribi merchants' accounting lists and letters typically express the value of goods and payments in quarter-dinars. These are the dinars "weighed with the Palermo weight" (*bi-waẓn al-siqillīyya*), as stated in a letter written at about that time, or perhaps a bit earlier. The ordinary, or full, dinars were called *danānīr kibār* ("great dinars") in the protocol of a *bēt dīn* held in Syracuse on 21 April 1020. About 1050, Ismaʿīl b. Jacob al-Andalusī writes that merchants preferred coins from the Palermo mint, although he himself was in no hurry to exchange the Mahdiyya currency he had with him. This preference for one or another type of coinage may not have been related to the quality of minting, but to 'political' considerations—that is, the degree of convenience involved in the use of the various coins. It is reasonable to assume that merchants based in Egypt preferred the Sicilian minting, which was done in the name of the Egyptian rulers, to coins minted by the Zīrid rulers of Ifrīqiya, whose acceptability outside the latter country was limited. Convenience of use—a factor dependent on the political situation—undoubtedly affected the degree of readiness to accept payment in Sicilian coins, as well as the exchange rate of those coins. An interesting case is cited in a deed written on 15 December 1047: 300 *ṭarī* coins (quarter-dinars) were exchanged in Dimunish for 62 dinars (*ḍarkemōnīm*, certainly minted outside Sicily), and two *qīrāṣ*, which are equivalent to four quarter-dinars, plus about 20 *qīrāṣ* per full dinar—that is, an increase of about 20% over the expected rate.

At times we find details on the nature of coins. For example, the description *danānīr nizārīyya* relates to quarter-dinars of the *ṭarī* type minted in the name of Nizār, who was the Fatimid caliph al-ʿAzīz; the use of the term *ṭarī* clearly indicates that these coins were minted in Sicily, certainly confirming the island's dependence on the Fatimid regime in Egypt at the time of their minting. The coins themselves are mentioned some 65 years after al-ʿAzīz day, in a letter written by Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī on 3 August 1063. In an accounting list dating from 1056, written by Yeshūʿa b. Ismaʿīl al-Makhmūrī and dealing with goods from Sicily, we find the term *rubāʿī ṣamsāmī*—that is, from the reign of al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf, or Ṣamsām al-dawla (approximately 1036-1045); the minting of coins in that Sicilian ruler's name certainly attests to his desire to emphasize his independence of the Zīrid rulers of Ifrīqiya (see sec. 311 above).

Aside from coins minted by Muslims, Sicily appears to have circulated no small number of Byzantine quarter-dinars. Isaac b. Khalaf, writing in approximately 1060, notes that he sent by ship a *ṣurra rubāʿīyya rūmiya* (that is, a pouch of 'Christian' quarter-dinars; these were quite probably Byzantine in origin, but may have been minted by Normans or other Christians), as well as additional sums of money in this currency. Their rate of exchange was quoted at 58-60 dinars per 100 *rubāʿīyya*. These were coins whose inscription was arranged in three lines (*asṭūr*). I have no explanation for this rate of exchange, the reason for which must remain a subject for conjecture. Several of the Geniza letters mention the dispatch of pouches (*ṣurra*, plural: *ṣurar*), containing gold and various coins, from Sicily to Egypt; this seems to prove that the island's balance of trade was negative, and was apparently balanced by sums of money sent in from outside, usually for military purposes. One of the letters notes the shipment

of *tibr*, unworked gold (apparently an ingot), 90 dinars in weight, along with a pouch containing 100 dinars and 1500 quarter-dinars minted on the island (*ḡarb siqillīyya*).

Regarding measures, it should be noted that the term *raṭl siqillī* is found in several of the merchants' letters. In 1046, it is mentioned in testimony concerning the estate of Mūsā b. ʿAllūsh, a man of Jarba who did business in Sicily; the testimony mentions 54 *raṭls* of silk, and precises: "(weighed) in their *raṭl*, the *siqillī*". It goes on to state that the *raṭl siqillī* is heavy, it may have been equal to the Spanish *raṭl*, which was a bit heavier than was customary.³²³

5. Taxes

(324) The merchants' letters in the Geniza include many complaints about the customs duty imposed on imported goods. This was a tax generally imposed on foreign merchants, especially on *dhimmīs*—that is, Jews and Christians. This specific duty was called *khums* or *ʿushr* in Arabic, and *ḥomesh* or *ʿissūr* in Hebrew (these words mean respectively 'a fifth' and 'a tenth, tithe'); it was also referred to by the term for 'tax' in general—*mas* in Hebrew and *kharāj* in Arabic. In Sicily, the almost constant tension due to the unusual circumstances and events discussed above led the island's leaders to levy special taxes on its population (especially on its Christians and Jews), in addition to the usual *jizya*, or poll tax. A letter from Sicily to Jerusalem, written in about 1020, complains bitterly about the special tax, 'the penalties' (*ʿonāshīm*), imposed on Jews for the last "several years"; this was "a fixed tax on every head, four and one-third *ṭarīs*, which is a great debt, 17 *ṭarīs* and something over". It may be understood from this that the ordinary poll tax was about 13 *ṭarīs*, or (see above) a bit more than three full dinars; the special, additional tax was one (full) dinar and two *qūrāts* ($2/24 = 1/3 \times 1/4$).

The first mention of customs duty on imported goods is found in letters from the early eleventh century. One of the letters to Joseph ibn ʿAwkal

³²³ See Amari, *Storia*, II, 457. See also: Spahr, *Monete*, 109-130; Balog, in *Gli arabi in Italia*, 614. For *rubāʿī* in the general sense of money: 745, a, l. 13. Cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 259f.; *Pal-est.*, II, 53 (no. 31, l. 12; about 1015) on *darkemōnīm*; the hypotheses raised there by me concerning those *darkemōnīm* should be complemented by what is set forth below. See Stern's article on the *ṭarī* in *Studi medievali* (Spoleto), ser. 3, 11:177, 1970, and especially 178f., 182f.. Accounts in quarter-dinars: see e.g. 210 (about 1030); 251: the prices are all in *rubāʿīyya*, in Māzar (Nehorai b. Nissim, about 1053). The Palermo weight: 215, a, l. 12. "Great dinars": 223, l. 18. See 364, b, l. 13 (shortly before 1057): Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrī paid for five *danānīr ṭarīyya* the sum of 181 dirhams, or more than 36 dirhams per dinar; this is strange, as the price of a full dinar was usually 40 dirhams; therefore, either the dirham was then unusually low, or there was also a specific kind of full dinar known as *ṭarī*. Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 377 (no. 31). Ismaʿīl b. Jacob: 573, a, margin, right. The deed: 822. Joseph b. Mūsā: 373, a, l. 21. *Rubāʿī ṣamṣāmī*: 325, a, l. 21. Isaac b. Khalaf: 738, a, ll. 16-19. See additional mentions of Byzantine quarter-dinars in Sicily: 449, a, margin; 576, a, ll. 27, 29; 789, a, l. 33, and margin. *Tibr* etc.: 573; cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, 232f. See many other shipments of money, e.g. in 651. It is admittedly possible that the large number of gold shipments also had to do with the local production of gold which I have noted above. Mūsā b. ʿAllūsh: 821, ll. 9, 12. The 'heavy' *raṭl*: 563, a, l. 5; cf. Hinz, 33. See also 281, l. 4: 40 *raṭls siqillī* of lacquer.

refers to a certain Sa'īd, *ghulām ṣāhib al-khums* ("the clerk [or perhaps servant or slave] of the customs official"). Thanks to the direct influence of the wealthier merchants on government officials, yet certainly not to any sentimental attitude toward the Jews, it was occasionally possible to achieve a temporary revocation or waiver of taxes on imports. Some of the merchants were at times in contact with the central authorities toward this end, as Nehorai b. Nissim noted in one of his letters, that following the intervention of Abū'l-Ḥasan b. Ḥayyim (an appellation of 'Alī ha-Kohen b. Yahyā-Ḥayyim), the trustee and *parnās* of Fustat, they had managed to obtain (surely from the caliph, al-Mustaṣṣir) a *siḡill* revoking the 'ushr in Sicily. At about the same time, Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār, writing from Palermo, claims that it was he himself who managed to have the evil decree against the foreign merchants set aside. None of them (he writes) will henceforth have to pay bribes; this, after having kept their warehouses closed for some time (apparently for fear of the authorities). Ḥayyim notes that it was possible to evade paying *a'shār* (plural of 'ushr), but that this involved a certain difficulty: *al-piqqehīm* (an interesting neologism in itself, being composed of an Arabic definite-article prefix and a Biblical Hebrew word meaning "the seeing ones"). These, the omniscient secret agents of the authorities, were apparently Jewish informers.

Maymūn b. Khalfa, writing from Palermo on 18 August 1056, complains about the 'ushr, calling it a terrible disaster, and states that, in his opinion, the shipment of goods to Sicily should be halted entirely. 'He' and 'his' people are in trouble (the reference is apparently to the ruler, Ibn al-Thumna; in other words, there was some connection between the military pressures and the exorbitant taxation). The Jews, however, are partially to blame, for spreading exaggerated rumors; and why is the *sulṭān* demanding 'ushr? Because he was told that the men of the city were recording the goods of foreign merchants as if they belonged to themselves. (This matter of concealment of ownership will be discussed again below.) The same letter mentions the fact that certain men were imprisoned because of the 'ushr (apparently because of concealment of ownership), including Maṣliḥ b. Elia, the *dayyān* of Sicily. Nineteen days later, on 6 September 1056, Joseph b. Farah writes from Alexandria, hinting at the same matter—the serious situation regarding the 'ushr in Sicily; he also seems to have been referring to the abovementioned imprisonments. References to the same matter, here called "*al-issūr min Ishmael*", are also found in documents regarding a certain Moses b. Judah, a resident of Sicily, who—being exempt from the tax on imports—had allowed much merchandise to be shipped in his name. The abovementioned Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār, a merchant of Palermo, writes in about 1069 and mentions having paid 150 *rubā'īyya* for *jamī' aṣṣhābnā* ("all of our people"); the reference is apparently to the Maghribi Jewish merchants. In another passage of the same letter, we learn how strictly the Sicilian authorities dealt with the Jewish merchants, requiring them to pay *maks* unless they could furnish irrefutable proof that the imported goods really belonged to local residents. Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār, in fact, did organize a dispatch of certificates to that effect, as we learn from a letter in which he dictates the formula of such a certificate to be sent to him.

Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, writing from Alexandria in about 1056, on behalf of a man named Judah from Maḥdiyya who had just arrived from Māzar, tells of the strict customs officials in that city—known as the *‘ashshārīn*, or collectors of *‘ushr*—who had kept watch over the boat all night. Salāma b. Mūsā b. Isaac al-Safāqūsī, in a letter written on 7 September 1064, bewails the troubles which had afflicted him in Sicily; he had arrived on the island secretly, and upon leaving, had had to bribe the officials in order to avoid the *kharāj* tax. In another letter, written in Alexandria in approximately 1068, he complains of the situation in Palermo, which was extremely difficult, as even local residents were required to pay *‘issūr*! A learned Jew from southern Italy, who had arrived in Palermo (*Ṣiqīlī’a*) from Amalfi, has nothing to say of the city except that passengers were obligated to pay “customs on everything”. When the abovementioned Salāma b. Mūsā decided to leave Safāqūs and settle in Māzar, and to buy a house there, he took pains to register as a resident of the latter city, stating in a letter that *nazalt ismī fī'l-qānūn* (“I have put my name on the list [of permanent residents]”); his motivation for doing so was undoubtedly the fact that permanent residents, though subject to *jizya*, were exempt from *maks* (customs).

The matter of concealing the true ownership of goods and passing them off as belonging to local residents is repeatedly mentioned in the Geniza letters. For example, Dūnash b. Isaac of Tripoli in Libya, writing in about 1030, states that he is preparing a (false) statement for the tax authorities, so that the ownership of the merchandise will not be known. An earlier document found in the Geniza is a certificate of the court in Syracuse, dating from 21 April 1020, requiring Elia b. al-Ḥaddād to swear, in a matter concerning an inheritance, that he had indeed received gold (dinars), but not (raw) silver, and the authorities had required the public to be present at the oath-taking. This incident obviously also involved concealment of ownership—in this case, regarding the amount of raw silver which had been imported into Sicily in the name of this Elia. Mūsā b. Isaac of Safāqūs, writing on 7 September 1059, asks that flax be shipped to him in Palermo; the flax, though, should not be sent in his name, but in that of Isaac b. Khalaf, a resident of Sicily. Active in organizing concealments of ownership was this same Ḥayyim b. ‘Ammār twice mentioned above; many shipments of goods belonging to other merchants were sent to the island in his name, in order to evade the *‘ushr*.³²⁴

³²⁴ On the matter of the special tax, see Gil, *Hist.*, 150, n. 17. *Ṣāḥib al-maks*: 201, b, l. 4. Nehorai: 253, a, ll. 19-20 (about 1053); cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, p. 344. Ḥayyim b. ‘Ammār: 651, a, ll. 16-18, 38-40. Cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, II, 608 n. 43: the *piqqeḥim*, in his opinion, are the *nuzzār*, whom he finds in TS 13 J 13, f. 24, l. 16. Maymūn: 561, a, ll. 29-31; b, ll. 2-5. Joseph b. Farah: 513, a, l. 18. Moses b. Judah: Gil, *Hist.*, 154; *idem.*, *Palest.*, II, 726 (no. 395, l. 19). The other letter of Ḥayyim b. ‘Ammār: 654, a, ll. 24-27; b, ll. 10-12, 28-29. Mūsā: 453, a, ll. 9 ff. and on margin. Salāma: 751, a, ll. 21-28; the *‘issūr*: 753, b, margin, top. “Customs on everything”: 815, a, ll. 15-16; 745, a, l. 12. Dūnash: 204, a, ll. 23-24 (the details are not clear because of the state of the manuscript). Syracuse: 223, ll. 24-25; cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, II, 40. Mūsā b. Isaac: 748, a, l. 65. Ḥayyim b. ‘Ammār: 651, ll. 22 ff.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TOWNS

(325) The Arab authors of the Middle Ages do not provide much information on the towns of Sicily. Ibn Ḥawkal spent some time in Sicily during AH 362. In his book, he cites 10 Rajab of that year (22 April 973) as having been spent in PALERMO, and gives a brief description of that city—most of which is devoted to complaints and even libelous accusations of the city's Muslims, and especially of several notables. Most of his anger seems to have arisen from his identification with the Fatimids, whereas most (if not all) of the people of Palermo were Sunnis, loyal to the caliph in Baghdad. He mainly notes the city's markets, some of which I have already mentioned in the description of economic affairs in Sicily. It is interesting to note that he pronounced (and wrote) the city's name as *Bulurm*; this is closely related to the pre-Islamic form of its name, Panormus; and we have already found an even closer version, *Palorm*, in a Geniza letter. The writer notes that the city is also commonly called *Siqilliyya*; indeed, both Muslims and Jews generally referred to it as *madīnat Siqilliyya*, "the city of Sicily". This phrase was at times shortened in both directions; some referred to Palermo as *Siqilliyya*, and others as *al-madīna* ('the city'). Palermo continued to be called by Sicilian Jews *al-Madīna* even in later generations, as can be seen in a Judaeo-Arabic document of 16 January 1480.

Ibn Ḥawkal mentions the Jewish quarter, *ḥārat al-yahūd*, stating that the quarter was entered through the *bāb al-ḥadīd* (the iron gate), but there also was a new gate, built by Abū'l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad b. Abī'l-Ghanā'im b. Abī'l-Ḥusayn (°Alī); the latter, a Kalbid, ruled the island between 953 and 969, and the gate was indeed 'new' in Ibn Ḥawkal's day. He also mentions the *simāṭ*—a stone-paved market bisecting the city from east to west and lined with shops; this was apparently a commercial street which served as Palermo's main street and commercial center. The *simāṭ* is mentioned in a Geniza letter from a Sicilian writing from Tyre, apparently in the early eleventh century.

Idrīsī, writing in the twelfth century—that is, under the Normans—notes that Palermo was then composed of two parts; the *qaṣr*, or citadel, and the *rabaḍ*, or area outside the citadel; the latter included the old city and *al-khālīṣa* (the abovementioned administrative centre built by the Muslims).

According to Idrīsī, the city (in which he lived) had three *simāṭs* (Arabic plural: *asmiṭa*). One of them (apparently the main one, mentioned in the Geniza letters and by Ibn Ḥawkal) contained impressive palaces (*quṣūr*), as did the other two.

Two special places in Palermo mentioned in the Geniza letters, besides the *simāṭ*, are the *mashraba* and the *funduq*. Concerning the *mashraba* (which literally means 'well'), we have no details to relate, other than that the merchants' business was conducted there. As for the *funduq*, there were

certainly more than one inn in Palermo—as, in fact, noted by Idrīsī. However, the inn in which the Jewish merchants used to meet and apparently sleep, and to keep their goods as well, was the *funduq* al-Samanṭārī. This inn seems to have been owned by a man from Samanṭār, a village in Sicily mentioned by Yāqūt. Also cited in Palermo is the *funduq al-zabīb* (“inn of the raisins”). Di Giovanni, quoting from a document written in Greek in 1094, mentions a place called Phachaer, which is probably a corruption of the Arabic *fakhkhār* (“ceramics”). He also speaks of an inn called *olagiorum*, which should probably be emended to *oleatorum*, “inn of the oil merchants” (*funduq al-zayyātīn*).

Based on later sources, di Giovanni states that what had been part of the *ḥārat al-yahūd* belonged in his day (some 130 years ago) to the monastery of S. Nicola Tolentino, and the rest of that quarter was then the courtyard (*cortile*) of the *moschitta* (the mosque), between the streets of de’ Ferrari and de’ Calderari. Still situated there were the synagogue, the ritual slaughterhouse, and “the Jews’ inn” (*fondaco della Giudecca*), which was then located near Porta Busuldeni. The “new gate” of the Jewish quarter mentioned in Ibn Ḥawkal was situated, in di Giovanni’s time, near the Church of the 40 Saints (de’ SS. Quaranta).³²⁵

(326) Aside from Palermo, the Geniza documents mention several other towns in Sicily. First of these is MĀZAR (now Mazara); being the closest port to the coastline of Ifrīqiya, this was a popular destination for the Maghribi merchants and their ships, and is mentioned in 35 of the Maghribi Jewish merchants’ letters. The Spanish merchant Jacob b. Ismaʿīl mentions the *sūq al-kattānīn*; this was the flax merchants’ market in Māzar. Nehorai b. Nissim stayed there in approximately 1053, and organized shipments of goods in both directions—import and export. Mūsā b. Abī l-Ḥayy gives details on ship movements into and out of Māzar, as well as on merchants

³²⁵ Ibn Hawkal, 118ff. The 1480 document: see Giuffrida et Rocco, *Studi magrebini*, 8 (1976), 27 (no. 24). Palorm: TS NS 149.1, II, l. 3: “Palorm which is called Ṣiqilliyya”. The Sicilian: 238, b. l. 9. In TS Ar 50.193, l. 1, a letter from a *nāsī* in Jerusalem to the congregation of Palermo, we find *madīnat PLRM*; this is not a sign of an earlier time (by contrast to Palorm); but rather, shows that the Jews, as usual, did not turn the p into a b. The *simāt* today: corso Vittorio Emanuele. The origin of the word is apparently Latin, *semita*; see *semita ballatata* (“balconied”) in De Simone, *Studi magrebini*, 2:129, 1968. See also Amari, *Storia*, III, 74, 98, 137, 812. See Ibn Jubayr (Beirut 1964), 226f., who describes the market in Ḥalab, which was divided by professions, each one having its own *simāt*, and all of them leading to the entrance of the central mosque, the *jāmiʿ*. Perhaps one should look for a Semitic origin of the word, like *simā* in Aramaic. More on Palermo: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 409f. (copied from Ibn Ḥawqāl). See Idrīsī on Italy (ed. Amari et Schiaparelli), 22f.; cf. Chalandon, 206. The name *al-Madīna* for Palermo is often used in the Geniza documents; see the phrase “in al-Madīna in Ṣiqilliyya” in the deed 821, l. 4. See also: Bodl. MS Heb b 13, f. 42, l. 9, in a memorandum concerning a dispute between Ephraim b. Shemariah and “Amrūn b. Elia of Madīnat Ṣiqilliyya”. The *mashraba*: 215 b, ll. 15, 17. The *funduq*: *ibid.*, a, l. 6. Samanṭār: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, III, 144f. This was the native place of Abū Bakr ʿAtīq b. ʿAlī b. Daʿūd al-Samanṭārī, a great scholar and author, who travelled a great deal in the Islamic countries; he died on 21 Rabīʿ II, 464 (16 January 1070); he may have been of the same family as the owner of the *funduq*. Cf. Semantara in Amari, *Storia*, II, 497; III, 217. The *funduq* al-Samanṭārī: 201, a, l. 16: ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Ukhuwwa, friend and partner of the Maghribi Jewish merchants, used to stay at that *funduq* during his visits to Palermo. The *funduq* (apparently that of al-Samanṭārī) is also mentioned in 215, a, l. 6. The *funduq al-zabīb*: 179, a, l. 7. See Di Giovanni, *Porto antico*, 92; *idem.*, *Topografia*, I, 102f. For *oleatorum*, see Du Cange, s.v. Bringing merchandise to the *funduq*: 651, a, l. 23.

arriving from various places and the merchandise brought by them. Ismaʿīl b. Farah, writing from Alexandria, states that four ships had arrived from Sicily, and that the men aboard them had told him that his brother, Sulaymān b. Farah, had reached Sicily from Qayrawān and was staying in Māzar. Prominent among the non-Sicilians staying in Māzar were a family from Safāqūs, who left several interesting letters in the Geniza. Salāma b. Mūsā b. Isaac al-Safāqūsī notes in one of his letters that he was going to enroll in the list of permanent residents in Māzar, where he intended to pay his *jizya* and was even about to buy a house. This, despite his severe complaints against the local (Jewish) merchants. Another of his letters notes his moving to Māzar and settling there as an established fact. Among the men of Alexandria who were in close contact with Māzar, let me mention Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy and the Qābisīs of Alexandria, Ismaʿīl b. Farah and the rest of the family. Also involved with Māzar were the 'Spaniards' (Andalusīs), sons of Ismaʿīl, who lived in Palermo, and the al-Madīnīs—David, Ḥayyim, and Zechariah—also residents of Palermo.

SYRACUSE (Saraqūsa) is also mentioned in two Geniza documents: the abovementioned protocol of a *bēt dīn* written in 1020, and a letter written by Umm al-Khayr (to be mentioned later in this chapter), who states that her son, Abū Yūsuf, married in Syracuse and settled there. Abū Naṣr al-Sīraqūnī (of Syracuse) is mentioned in several Geniza letters written by the Jerusalem *parnās* ʿAlī ha-Kohen b. Ezekiel, who sends him his regards. Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl al-Makhmūrī, in an accounting list drawn up in approximately 1056, lists hides bought in Syracuse.

DIMUNISH (Demone) is mentioned several times in these letters. The name appears in the protocol of a *bēt dīn* written in 1046 concerning Mūsā b. ʿAllūsh, a businessman from the island of Jarba, who often traveled to Sicily and Egypt on business. On one occasion, he set sail in a ship belonging to Mīḍād, with a cargo of various merchandise, along with other passengers from Dimunish; the ship sank, and all aboard were drowned. A credit note given by Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī to Joshua b. Nathan (and related to the judgment of the said *bēt dīn*) also mentions Dimunish. The abovementioned accounting list drawn up by Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl al-Makhmūrī speaks twice of "the profit in Dimunish". At about the same time, a letter from Jacob b. Ismaʿīl al-Andalusī of Palermo to Nehorai b. Nissim mentions, *inter alia*, a load of flax which Abū'l-Faḍl, the son of the *dayyān* (possibly the son of the abovementioned Maṣliḥ b. Elia, *dayyān* of Sicily), had left in Māzar prior to his departure for Spain, requesting that it be sold in 'al-Dimūnish' (the word, unusually, is here written with a *waw* in Hebrew, and it was apparently pronounced something like 'Demones'). Judah b. Elia al-Dimunishi is mentioned several times in the Geniza letters; he was probably the brother of the said Maṣliḥ b. Elia, who will be mentioned more fully below. These citations may lead to the conclusion that Dimunish was the name of a town, and not only that of a region, the Val Demone (Latin: Vallis Doemonum, "the Valley of the Demons").

Also mentioned is IṬRĀBANISH, or Trapani (in the Arabic sources: Ṭarābanish). A letter written from there to Nehorai b. Nissim by Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, in about 1053, speaks mainly of trade with Sicily. On 11 October 1056 (estimated date), Ibrahīm b. Farrāh of Alexandria writes, *inter alia*, that "the big ship" had entered Iṭrābanish. Mention is made of

RAGŪS (=Raghūs or Raghūṣ, Arabic forms of Ragusa), near Syracuse (some 40 kms. to the southwest), as having been the place of origin of Maṣliḥ b. Elia's family; Umm al-Khayr, the mother of that family, writes from there to her son Judah in Fustat, in approximately 1058.³²⁶

³²⁶ The *sūq al-kattānīn* in Māzar: 576, a, l. 34. Nehorai in Māzar: 251. Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: 453. Isma'īl: 488. Salāma: 745; 752 and see Māzar in the Index. In a letter of 1182 there is still mention of "the Jewish canal" (خندق اليهود) in the Māzar area, in a list of pious dedications to the church of St. Mary there, see: Cusa, *Diplomi*, 229. A court record on a dispute in Māzar is preserved in the Geniza: "in the city of Māzar situated on the sea" (coast), on 10 Siwan AM 4898 (22 May 1138). The parties were Saadia b. Mevorakh "known as al-Jazā'irī" ("man of the islands", meaning the city of Algiers), attorney for Berākhā b. Joseph, known as "b. al-Sirtī", from Sirt in Libya; and the father-in-law of this Berākhā, Hayyim b. Reuben; the object was a sum of 40 quarter-dinars owed to Hayyim's daughter, Sayyida. A compromise was reached, on 15 quarter-dinars. See TS Box K 27, f. 3. The court document from Syracuse: 223; Umm al-Khayr: 798, a, l. 7. Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl: 325, l. 1. Al-Siraqūnī: in Gil, *Palestine*, III, 74 (no. 450), 77 (no. 451). The court document: 821, ll. 2 ff. The credit note: 822, ll. 4, 5, 7. The profit in Dimunish: 325, a, l. 32; b, l. 22. Jacob b. Isma'īl: 576, a, l. 34. Judah b. Elia, see 236, a, l. 66; 575, a, ll. 33, 46; 798 (a letter to him from his mother). For the name Demone, see Amari, *Storia*, I, 607; the name was given to the region because of its proximity to the volcano Etna. Barhūn b. Mūsā: 344, a, l. 2. Abraham b. Farrāh: 553, a, l. 9. Umm al-Khayr: 798. In the fifteenth century there is also mention of a certain Yūdā Dimunishī (i.e., of Demone), in a Judaeo-Arabic document, see Giuffrida et Rocco, *Studi magrebini*, 8 (1976), 94 (no. 40); the editors understood it as 'di Minisi'.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE JEWS OF SICILY

(327) The Jewish population of Sicily was one of those which may be called “a millenary Jewry”. This is my own name for groups of Jews which lived in one of the Diaspora countries for a millenium or more, through various ups and downs, including periods of true prosperity, and were eventually destroyed, falling victim to the hostility of their environment in more or less violent ways—at best, by expulsion. Jews had dwelt in Roman-Byzantine-Greek Sicily for many generations prior to the Arab conquest. As we have already seen, the Jews still often used Palermo’s former name, Panormus, though admittedly in a distorted version, Palorm. In about 1030, some two hundred years after the Muslim conquest of Palermo, we still find mention of a Jew with a Greek name: Pappos b. Shabbetai, apparently a local notable, whose name is found among the signatories of a letter from the Jewish congregation of that city.

The monk Theodosios, in a letter to Archdeacon Leo listing the various merchants who were present at the time of the Muslim conquest (May 879—a temporary conquest, as noted above), includes Jews (as well as Ethiopians, Tarsians, and Lombards), all of whom were seized and imprisoned together. The Jewish community of Syracuse undoubtedly continued to exist under Islamic rule, as proven by the abovementioned protocol of the *bēt dīn* in Syracuse, dated 21 April 1020. That protocol, as stated above, had to do with an inheritance; it was apparently customary among the Jews of the Island, and perhaps those of the entire area, to hear such cases out in front of the entire congregation.

According to many generations of tradition, Sicilian Jewry—as part of the Jewry of Rome and Byzantium—was under the authority of Palestine. This connection with the Palestinian yeshiva undoubtedly continues after the Muslim conquests—that of Palestine, and subsequently that of Sicily. The first evidence of the special relationship with Palestine can be seen in the letter (or, actually, a copy thereof) from the Geniza, written by the Jewish congregation of Palermo to the head of the Palestinian yeshiva (of the exilarchic family) in about 940, as mentioned above (sec. 309). This letter was intended to be read “before our lord, our *nagid*, our great one, our *nāsī* [son of] our *nāsī*, our king and son of our king”, etc.

It appears that the Fatimids were interested in the growth of the Jewish population in Sicily, as part of their policy, of support for any economic activity. We have before us the testimony of Shabbetai Donnolo; he tells that during the incursion of the Fatimid army in Southern Italy, in AM 4685, his family (“my parents and my relatives”) were taken from Oria to Ifrīqiya and to “the land of Palermo”; this happened on a Monday, 9 Tammūz, i.e., 4 July 925. Shabbetai himself was redeemed from the ‘Ishmaelites’, with “my parents’ money”, and he remained in Italy; he was

then 12 years old. These things happened after the Fatimids overcame the Byzantine incursion on the island, and after the battles between the two parties, in Sicily and in Southern Italy (above, sec. 309).

The author of the Scroll of Aḥīmaʿaš writes of Palṭiel, his ancestor, who was "the shield of the congregations of the people of God, who live in Egypt and in Palestine, in Palīrmo (sic) and in Ifriqa (sic)", etc. This passage is appropriate to the period following the conquest of Egypt by the Fatimids (969), under the caliph al-Muʿizz. This seems to reflect a special influence exerted by the Jews of the Maghrib and of Egypt, through that "court Jew" whose exact identity is still unknown, on the central administration of Egypt and on the Kalbid governors who were, from that time forth, to rule the island on behalf of the Fatimids. This influence may be assumed to have engendered the encouragement of trade and the relaxation of taxes. An important role in this relationship was certainly played by the Palestinian yeshiva, which was a focus of connection and coordination between the Jewish congregations and their personages in the Mediterranean countries.

Another early piece of evidence in this area may be found in a letter dating from approximately 980, dealing with the estate of a freed slave named Bundār of Palermo, who had left some 35 dinars, one-quarter of his property, "to the poor of Jerusalem, may it be rapidly rebuilt, to the Rabbanites alone". The transfer of the money from Sicily (apparently Palermo) to Jerusalem was arranged by Samuel b. Hoshānā, of the Palestinian yeshiva, who happened to be on the island at the time.

We also find a later letter, written from Palermo in about 1020 by Abū'l-Ḥayy b. Ḥakīm to Ḥananiah ha-Kohen *av-bēt-dīn* b. Joseph, during the gaonate of Josiah b. Aaron. The opening portion of the letter has not been preserved. From its continuation, we learn that the Jews of Palermo had received a letter from Josiah Gaon "to the entire holy congregation living here in the island of Siqilliyya". The letter was read out in the *keneset* (the synagogue) on the Sabbath; the people of Palermo, however, could not grant the gaon's request to send financial assistance to Jerusalem, because of the high tax burden imposed upon them (see my discussion of taxes in Sicily above). Many of Sicily's Jews were poor, and many had fled from the island, out of "fear of the lord of the country". The congregation did not write to the gaon himself, as they were ashamed to write to him "with nothing". Rather, the writer undertakes "to make efforts with neither negligence nor weakness, in these holy days" (the letter was written on the first day of Elul, the month of penitence, which precedes the Jewish New Year)—that is, to obtain the required amount of contributions from the congregation. In 1035, Ephraim b. Shemariah, head of the 'Palestinian' congregation in Fustat, mentions the sum of 35 dinars—a definitely respectable amount—sent by the Jews of Sicily as their share in a special appeal on behalf of the Jews of Jerusalem. One of the letters written by Solomon b. Judah, the Palestinian Gaon, on 7 May 1029, mentions the sum of 20 dinars remaining from the funds sent by the people of Palermo.

We are also in possession of some information regarding the relations between the Jews of Sicily and those of other communities. "Your well-wishers, the congregation of Fustat, Egypt" writes to "our great ones, our

noble ones, our men, the delighters of our heart... who live in *medīnat siqillīyya*"; unfortunately, only the opening passage of this letter remains.

I have already mentioned the letter in which Nehorai b. Nissim announces the repeal of the *ʿushr* in Sicily, thanks to the intervention of ʿAlī ha-Kohen b. Ḥayyim, the *parnās* of Fustat: he reports having been informed of "the end of the matter of the order by the authorities to our people concerning the repeal of the *ʿushr* in Sicily by Master Abū'l-Ḥasan (i.e. ʿAlī) b. Ḥayyim, may God reward him well". A letter from the congregation of Palermo, written in about 1030, was sent to the congregation of Qayrawān and the communities of Mahdiyya; another, written by the same congregation in the same year, was sent to the congregation of Alexandria. The letter to Qayrawān is written to Elḥanan b. Ḥushiel, to the *nagid* Jacob b. ʿAmram, and to "all of the decent elders who are in Mahdiyya"; its writers are "your younger, tinier [brethren], the *bēt dīn* of Siqillīyya and its elders, the youngest of your servants". The address reads: (to) "the holy congregation which is in Qayrawān", (and to) "our brethren, the communities of Mahdiyya", (from) "the congregation of Siqillīyya". The two letters concern one of the prominent personalities living on the island, a man of Spanish origin named Ḥayyim (Khalaf) b. Jacob, and his son Nissim. In the letter to Qayrawān, these details are preserved in full; in that to Alexandria, some of them are deduced from context. It is reasonable to believe that that Ḥayyim b. Jacob had achieved high standing in the congregation by virtue of his wealth and his status vis-à-vis the administration; he was a great merchant, as also attested in letters from the archive of Ibn ʿAwkal. The letter to the people of Qayrawān and Mahdiyya places special emphasis on his successful intervention on behalf of tax exemption, thanks to his connections with the customs official. He saved part of the Jewish cemetery in Palermo from confiscation, whereas the *ʿarēlīm* ('uncircumcised', i.e. the Christians) were forced to pay huge sums in order to save their cemetery. He also rescued from the authorities goods belonging to Jewish merchants, from ships which had sunk en route from Sicily to Egypt—again, by contrast to the goods of others which "were sold, and they watched (while) the rulers took their money". Moreover, he rescued a scholar named Nathan from the wrath of the rulers (significant details are missing here, due to the poor condition of the document). The letter to Alexandria deals with the appointment of a guardian for the orphan Moses b. Elia; his deceased father Elia had been like a son to the abovementioned Ḥayyim (?) b. Jacob. The guardian seems to have had to collect funds owed to the deceased by the men of Alexandria, and to determine whether the deceased had left a will there. One of the purposes of these letters was apparently to increase the prestige enjoyed by Ḥayyim b. Jacob in the Maghrib and in Alexandria.³²⁷

³²⁷ On the Jews of Sicily during the pre-Islamic period, see Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, 475f., who quotes from Di Giovanni, *Codex diplomaticus sicilianus*, I, 44. See the summary of sources on the Jews of Sicily before the Muslim conquest in Golb, *JNES*, 32 (1973), 105f. Pappos: 236, a, l. 69. Theodosios' epistle: see *Rerum Italicarum scriptores*, I (2), 264. Cf. Amari, *Storia*, I, 550. He interprets Tharsenses as residents of Tarso in Lombardy: Tarsos, or Tharsos, was the chief city of Cilicia in Asia Minor. Cf. Ashtor, *Settimane*, 405 and n. 12: "many Jews". But the word 'many' is not written in Theodosios' letter. See also Kreutz, *Viator*, 7 (1976), 90. The protocol of the *bēt dīn*: 223; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, p. 40. The

(328) These community letters reflect a certain trend of emphasizing the partnership between the congregation and its leaders, a trend also reflected in the abovementioned protocol of the Syracuse *bēt dīn*. This trend is also reflected in a letter written in Alexandria by 'Aṭā' b. Zikrī, a Sicilian Jew, in about 1060. The writer is trying to get his share and that of his deceased brother back from a partnership with another merchant, who had refused to return the dead man's share. The writer now asks for a ruling according to Jewish law, and asks if he will have to take out the dead man's letter and show it "to the *dayyān* and the congregation".

Relations between the Jews of Sicily and 'the foreigners' were not always marked by understanding and good friendship. Bitter complaints are voiced in a letter written by Salāma b. Mūsā, who, though having decided to leave his native place and settle on the island (in Māzar), was not happy with the merchants of Sicily. The letter seems to refer to a ban (*ḥērem*); although the exact details have not been preserved, the intention appears to have been the proclaiming of a ban (in Jerusalem?) against the merchants of Sicily, who did not conduct themselves properly with the foreigners. Salāma requests the addressee, Judah b. Moses b. Sughmār, one of the important merchants of Fustat and his own partner, to act in this matter: "And please assemble the Sicilians from among our people, and put pressure on them, and notify them and tell them about the matter of the ban"; and to ensure that 'the Head' (Judah b. Saadia?) will "admonish them for what they are doing with the foreigners".

The synagogue of the Jews of Palermo is first mentioned some 100 years after the Muslim conquest of the city, in the letter from the congregation cited above: "We have been uprooted... and from our house of prayers". Abū'l-Ḥayy b. Ḥakīm, writing to Ḥananiah ha-Kohen *av-bēt-dīn* in about 1020, mentions that Josiah Gaon's letter "to the entire holy congregation living here on the island of Siqilliyya" was read "in the *keneset* on the Sabbath". The Jewish synagogue (*synagoga Judaeorum*) of Palermo is mentioned in the certificate of dedication dating from 1094, printed by di Giovanni; its text indicates that the synagogue was near the river. Di Giovanni also cites later sources mentioning the synagogue, which was obviously in the Jewish quarter.

The *heqdēsh* (pious foundation) of Palermo is mentioned in a memorandum copied by Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, on the back of a letter which reached him, and which had been written on 13 August 1062; accordingly, the memorandum dates from shortly after that time. The memorandum apparently has to do with money owed by Yeshū'ā to a rich man named Khallūf b. Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy. In the memorandum, the accepted formula, *de rigueur* in Jewish deeds, of "four ells of land which I

letter from the congregation of Palermo: TS NS 149.1; see n. 309 above. Donnolo, *Sefer Ḥakhmōnī*, 3. See the Scroll of Ahīma'as, 36. Bundār: TS 16.133, edited by Assaf, *Meqorōt*, 140 ff. Abū'l-Ḥayy: Gil, *Hist.*, 547; *idem*, *Palest.*, II, 75f. (no. 45). The appeal: *ibid.*, 597 (no. 326, ll. 19-21): Solomon b. Judah: *ibid.*, 146 (no. 80, l. 25): The opening passage of the letter from Fustat: TS 16.171v. Nehorai: 253, a, ll. 18-20; see also the discussion of taxes in Sicily, above, sec. 324. The letters from the congregation of Sicily: 236, 237; the handwriting of the two letters is similar. Ḥayyim b. Jacob conducted extensive business with Ibn 'Awkal and with the Tāhirtis: shipments of flax, hides, wax, and silk passed through his hands; see 181, a, ll. 13-20; 183, l. 2; 218, a, ll. 8-9; 337, a, l. 14. Cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 9 (1918/9), 162 ff.; Goitein, *ibid.*, II, 60f.

own in Palestine", is here: "four ells of land which I own in Siqilliyya"; and al-Samarqandī undertakes to pay "the poor of Sicily" a fine of 50 dinars, should he give the goods (722 *raṭls* of pepper and so forth) to Khallūf before the conclusion of the proceedings. 'The poor' (*al-ʿaniyīm*, another mixed Hebrew-Arabic construct) was usually a synonym for the *heqdēsh*.

We have no information concerning Karaites in Sicily. Jacob b. Ismaʿīl al-Andalusī of Palermo, in a letter written to Nehorai b. Nissim in about 1056, tells, inter alia, of the arrival of Abū'l-Faraj b. Asad—an appellation of the Karaite notable Yeshūʿā b. Judah—in Sicily. He had arrived on board a ship belonging to al-Ishfīlī ('the Sevillean'), and his presence there has prevented the shipowner from stealing all the goods of the Jewish merchants aboard, after those goods had all been flooded and soaked. We cannot know whether Yeshūʿā came to the island for purposes of trade, or to visit Karaites living there.

We do not have many details on the means by which the Jews of Sicily made their living. Some of them surely dealt in commerce, including several involved in large-scale import-export business on the island. These were the wealthiest and most influential members of the congregation, with the highest status vis à vis the island's rulers. The above is based on what we know from the letters preserved in the Geniza, the great majority of which were written by such merchants. We find a man of Palermo who mentions his father-in-law (or brother-in-law: *sihrnā* = *ṣihrnā*), Yaḥyā b. al-Munajjim (the astrologer). The same writer speaks of *janān*, gardens and orchards purchased by his father before he died; apparently, then, there were also farmers among the Jews of Sicily.

As for the relations between the Jews of Sicily and the Muslim authorities, the most pressing problem seems to have been insecurity due to the lack of political stability. We have already noted the drastic changes and near-incessant wars over the island's government; we have already considered the letter written by the Jewish congregation of Palermo close to the mid-tenth century, with its horrific descriptions of the fate befalling the city's Jews. There must certainly have been similar, if not worse, situations in other places on the island, and in other generations as well. Joseph b. Samuel al-Danī (from Danya in Spain), who settled in Palermo, writes from that city, apparently in the early eleventh century. The ship on which he set sail went down at sea, "and we came out without a dinar and without a dirham and without a stitch of clothing to wear, and I arrived naked in Tripoli" (of Libya). There, he managed to collect a debt owed him for flax by one of the local Jews, "I procured clothing and equipment... I made my way and arrived in Sicily (i.e. Palermo), and found my little house destroyed; it had ben destroyed by a man from Barqa, and built (anew, for himself), and I am fighting him in rage". The occupier of Joseph's house appears to have been one of the Muslim settlers from North Africa.

In the bitter and bloody struggle which developed in this Mediterranean part of the Muslim world, between the Fatimid rulers of Egypt and the Zīrids, toward the mid-eleventh century, the Fatimid rulers of Egypt seem to have been closer to the hearts of the island's Jews. The confiscation of the house mentioned above is perhaps a single example indicating a more widespread phenomenon of persecution by the Muslim settlers from Ifrīqiya and by the rulers of the latter country. Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl al-

Makhmūrī, in a letter written on 12 May 1052, complains that goods belonging to Maghribi Jewish merchants had been loaded, against their owners' will, onto a ship belonging to *al-rāshā'* ("the wicked one"; yet another Hebrew word with an Arabic prefix) al-Mu'izz; this, obviously, was al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs, ruler of Ifrīqiya.

On the other hand, we have no information concerning tense relations between Sicily's Jews and local Muslims. Sicily was known and loved for its natural advantages, its commerce was highly developed, and its inhabitants—of all three communities—appear to have made a good living. The Muslims were certainly more favourably disposed to the Jews than to the Christians; indeed, their relations with the latter and with the Christian kingdoms were generally bellicose. When Jewish merchants, as we have seen, write of 'the enemy' they undoubtedly refer to Christians, whether Byzantines or Normans. Nor do the Muslims of Sicily appear to have been extremely fervent in the practice of their religion. Ibn Ḥawkal, who stayed in Sicily in the 970s, expresses severe criticism of the island's Muslims in this connection, and even accuses them of evading participation in the *jihād* (holy war) by pretending to be clergymen or schoolteachers. Even if we suspect Ibn Ḥawkal—as a righteous adherent of the Shī'a in its Fatimid version—of having exaggerated, there must be a grain of truth in his words. The close and friendly relations between Jews and Muslims may have brought some of the Jews so near to Islam as to have abandoned their own religion. One such case is reported in a letter written from Alexandria by Joseph b. Farah on 6 September 1056. The writer had been informed by another merchant that, *inter alia*, "Joseph b. Shabbetai committed a crime (*afsha'a*, a Hebrew word in an Arabic pattern; its local meaning was 'converted from Judaism') in Palermo". He goes on to note that this Joseph b. Shabbetai was the cousin of Abū 'Imrān (surely an appellation for Mūsā, or Moses), the cantor's son—thus, the scion of a cantorial family—and adds: "and on the day of his crime, a terrible scandal arose".

The letters before us also provide some information on emigration from the island. In the early eleventh century, we encounter a merchant from Qayrawān, one of those who did business with Ibn 'Awkal, named Simhūn b. David b. al-Siqillī: This merchant's name would indicate that his paternal grandfather had come to Qayrawān from Palermo, and, as a new resident of the former city, had been called by the name of the latter; this may have been assumed to have taken place toward the mid-tenth century. We relatively often find Jews from Sicily in Egypt, in Fustat or Alexandria, and some of them may well have settled in Fustat. 'Aṭā' b. Zikrī, a man of Palermo mentioned above, requires a certificate attesting that signatures on documents are indeed his own, and a good way for him to obtain that certificate is to ask the men of Palermo living in Fustat to certify that these signatures are his.³²⁸

³²⁸ 'Aṭā' b. Zikrī: 775, b, l. 9; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 57, 338. Salāma: 745, a, ll. 4, 21 ff. The synagogue: TS NS 149 f. 1, d, l. 11. Gil, *Palest.*, II, 76 (no. 45, l. 12). See Di Giovanni, *Porto antico*, 92; *idem*, *Topografia*, I, 103. The memorandum: 319. The son of the astrologer, and the orchards: 238. Concerning Jews active in agriculture on the island, see also Ashtor, *HUCA*, 50:219, 1979. The destruction of the house: 173, a, ll. 4-9; according to Goitein, *Letters*, 316, this took place during the campaign of 1025/6; yet we have seen that no special events took place on the island itself during that campaign. This might have been

2. *Central personages among the Jews of Sicily*

(329) Obviously, not all of the personalities and leaders of Sicilian Jewry are known to us; in what follows, I shall discuss the personalities most often mentioned in the Geniza letters, who seem to have occupied a truly important role in the community life of those Jews. Some Sicilian Jewish personalities are known to us, principally by virtue of sojourns made by them in Fustat or Alexandria, where they were mentioned by local merchants in their letters, or their matters recorded in documents of the local *bēt dīn*. Thus, for example, we know of the Palermo merchant °AMRŪN B. ELIA, who is referred to in a court document dating from January 1016, as party to a dispute with Ephraim b. Shemariah, the perfume merchant from Fustat, head of the 'Palestinian' community. If that court document is telling us the whole truth, °Amrūn b. Elia dragged Ephraim before the *qāḏī* over a debt owed him by Ephraim. Thus, we see that °Amrūn was surely a great and rich merchant, capable of exerting influence on Muslim officials, and did not hesitate to breach the prohibition against appealing to the courts of the gentiles.

I have already mentioned ABŪ SA'ĪD ḤAYYIM, or KHALAF, son of JACOB AL-ANDALUSI. A letter from the congregation of Palermo, written in the early eleventh century, describes the activity of Abū Sa'īd Ḥayyim and his son Nissim on behalf of the local Jewish population. They saved many from persecution by the authorities and from penalties in tax matters, rescued the property of merchants whose ships had gone down, saved some of the Jewish cemetery from confiscation by the authorities, and kept the peace within the congregation—all this without any benefit to themselves, and at no expense to the congregation. We find this Spanish Jew involved in commerce with Joseph Ibn °Awkal, sending goods back and forth between Egypt and Sicily. We also have information on several relatives of Khalaf b. Jacob. Khalaf's brother, Isma'īl, was active in trade; in 1050, he was in Mahdiyya, shipping goods to Egypt on behalf of another Spanish merchant, Yusha' b. Nathan. Isma'īl's three sons, Jacob, Judah and Elḥanan, were also active in trade in Sicily. Jacob b. Isma'īl was active as early as the turn of the century, and is mentioned in a letter by Ephraim b. Isma'īl al-Jawharī. He was a merchant and a financier; a man of Palermo, writing from Tyre and recounting the disasters which had befallen him, notes that his father had 230 quarter-dinars on deposit with Abū Yūsuf (=Jacob) b. Isma'īl; this was undoubtedly al-Andalusī.

during al-Hākīm's time, before 1015, when Ja'far b. Yūsuf decided to expel the North African Berbers from the island; see above, sec. 311. Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl: 318, a, ll. 4 ff. Ibn Ḥawqal, 118ff. Joseph b. Farah: 513, a, ll. 19-20; cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, 300; Abū °Imrān Mūsā b. Judah, "the cantor's son", is probably Moses b. Judah, "the western cantor", mentioned in the deliberations held in the court of Daniel b. Azariah; this Moses was the partner of Ḥasan ha-Kohen b. Salmān, who set sail with the merchandise and died en route; see Gil, *Palest.*, II, 723 (no. 394, ll. 19-20), 725-726 (no. 395, ll. 12-16); and see also Gil, *Hist.*, 255. Simḥūn b. David wrote 221. °Aṭā': 775, a; cf. Goitein, *ASSO*, 67 (1971), 16; *idem*, *Med. Soc.*, II, 338; according to Goitein, there was a sort of colony of the Sicilians in Fustat.

Three letters by Jacob b. Ismaʿīl are preserved in the Geniza; they are all written from Palermo, and have mostly to do with trade, although they do give some details on the situation prevailing in Sicily during the late 1050s and up to approximately 1060. At that time, there were still imports and exports between Sicily and Egypt; he also mentions a matter of quires of queries and responsa which belonged to the *dayyān* of Sicily. His letters mention dealings in flax, spices, silk; he appears to have had a special relationship with Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Baʿbāʿ, whom we have encountered at the center of the events at the end of Muslim rule in Sicily. Jacob married in Fustat, apparently in 1061; his mother spent some time in Jerusalem. His brother, Judah b. Ismaʿīl, worked as his partner, and dealt in shipments of textiles, flax, oil, wheat, pearls, ammonia, as may be seen in two of his letters preserved in the Geniza. The third brother, Elḥanan, also played a major role in commerce on the island, although his letters have not come down to us.

Two sons of Khalaf b. Jacob al-Andalusī, Isaac and Jacob, are also mentioned in the Geniza letters. Jacob b. Khalaf was a witness to a memorandum drawn up in the *bēt dīn* of Nathan b. Abraham, which met in Fustat in March 1040 concerning a dispute over shipments of indigo and oil to Palermo. A certain Ṣemaḥ, writing from Palermo, notes that Jacob was involved in loading cargoes there, in about 1055. A letter written by Isaac b. Khalaf to David b. Shaʿya in Fustat in about 1060 concerns the shipment of various goods; in that letter, inter alia, Isaac asks David to show courtesy toward a Muslim friend of his, whose name indicates that he may have been a member of the Aghlabid family, rulers of Ifrīqiya before the Fatimid takeover. The two brothers maintained the family tradition of rendering assistance to non-Sicilian merchants in evading the *ʿushr*. We find the name of Jacob b. Khalaf as the owner of goods belonging to Abraham b. Farrāḥ of Alexandria, as attested in a letter by the Sicilian Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār, in about 1069. In September 1059, Mūsā b. Isaac al-Safāqūsī writes to Judah b. Moses b. Sughmār, asking him to record the flax shipments to Palermo in the name of Isaac b. Khalaf. The son of that Mūsā, Salāma, who sought to settle in Māzar, obviously considered the two brothers trustworthy, as he gives them the responsibility of purchasing a house for him, adding: "I shall leave quarter-dinars with Master Abū Ibrāhīm Isaac b. Khalaf, to buy the house, and he will mediate in this as God in His mercy will enable". We find that Isaac b. Khalaf was a relative by marriage of another Sicilian, ʿAṭāʾ b. Zikrī; more precisely, he is called a 'former' relative, though it is unclear whether the bonds were dissolved by divorce or death.³²⁹

³²⁹ ʿAmrūn b. Elia: Bodl MS Heb b 13, f. 42, edited by Poznanski, *REJ*, 48 (1904), 171f. Cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 585. The matter of Ḥayyim b. Jacob: 236; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 60f. His connections with Ibn ʿAwkal: 218; cf. also Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 36 (1966/7), 375; 37 (1967/8), 189. Ismaʿīl b. Jacob: his letter to Yushaʿ: 573. Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl: 180, II, 22, 24. 230 quarter-dinars: 238, a, II, 22-23. The letters of Jacob b. Ismaʿīl: 574-576. See also his two letters dating from about 1060 in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 209-214 (nos. 494, 495). The first of these letters (494) was written from Palermo (not from Tyre, as I have noted there), and the other from Tyre. Concerning his marriage and his mother: Gil, *Hist.*, 270 f., and there also on his brother Judah; see the latter's two letters: 577, 578; Jacob b. Khalaf: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 338 (no. 193; II, 19-20); Ṣemaḥ's letter: 789, b, I, 19. To David b. Shaʿya: 738, b (in Arabic script).

(330) Another family which left its mark on the Geniza letters, and which was undoubtedly central to Jewish life in Sicily, was that of the sons of °AMMĀR b. °EZRŪN AL-MADĪNĪ. The appellative 'al-Madīnī' obviously means "man of Palermo"; it is usually given to someone who leaves Palermo and takes up residence in a new place, where he is called by his place of origin. There are, however, some exceptions, such as this one, in which a man is called by his place of origin when he often leaves that place to travel abroad; in such cases, the Egyptian and Maghribi merchants were the ones who first called him by his place of origin. His three sons, Zakkār, Abū Zikrī Ḥayyim and Abū Naṣr David, are often mentioned in the Geniza letters. They were active in trade during their father's lifetime; he died in the summer of 1062.

In about 1055, we find Zakkār dealing in the purchase of large quantities of oil in Māzar; undertaking to supply lead in Sicily; buying large quantities of brazilwood (*baqam*); involved in matters of payments. Salāma b. Mūsā al-Safāquṣī asks Judah b. Moses b. Sughmār to assist Zakkār in his dealings in Egypt. I have already mentioned his appointment as "*nagid* over the Jews" of Sicily on behalf of Ibn al-Baḥbāḥ, when the latter assumed power in the last years of Muslim rule.

In matters of commerce, Ḥayyim b. °Ammār was apparently the most active of the three, if one may judge by the frequency with which his name is mentioned in the merchants' letters. He enjoyed close trade relations with Nehorai b. Nissim and the Tāhirtīs, with Āvōn b. Ṣedāqā, with Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, with the Ibn Sughmārs (especially Labrāt b. Moses), and others. My collection includes five of his letters: from Palermo, to Abū'l-Surūr (apparently Isaac b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī); from Palermo, to Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī; from Alexandria, to Judah (Yahyā) b. Moses the money-changer; from Alexandria, also to Joseph b. Moses al-Tāhirtī; from Palermo, yet again to the latter. His letters deal with shipments of goods: lead, silk, hides, oil, various perfumes and spices, and to a great degree also with the conditions of trade and shipping, including some details on the state of affairs in Sicily. In a letter from Alexandria in about 1060, Ḥayyim writes—apparently before setting sail—to his friend and partner Yahyā (Judah) b. Manasseh b. David al-Ṣayrafī (the money-changer), also descended from a Sicilian family, which had settled in Fustat. Most of the letter has to do with the return of a silver spoon which he had forgotten while staying in his house; this indicates the high standard of living of these families. As for the spoon itself, this may indicate a custom by which guests were given personal items belonging to their host as souvenirs. Other merchants' letters point out Ḥayyim b. °Ammār's dealings in other kinds of goods: pearls, flax. On receiving news of a disaster which had befallen a ship belonging to Wāhlān, among whose passengers had been Barhūn b. Ṣāliḥ al-Tāhirtī, it is to Ḥayyim b. °Ammār that Barhūn's worried cousin, Nissim b. Isaac, writes for information. That letter indicates that Ḥayyim b. °Ammār was related by marriage (his *ṣihr*) to Maymūn b. Khalfā, one of the most important merchants of the period. Āvōn b. Ṣedāqā

Ḥayyim b. °Ammār: 654, b, margin, right. Mūsā b. Isaac: 748, a, l. 27. Salāma: 745, a, ll. 2, 13-14, 32. A relative (*ṣihr*) of °Aṭā b. Zikrī: 775b.

writes a letter full of severe complaints to Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār from Jerusalem in February 1064.

The third brother, David, is also frequently mentioned in the merchants' letters. In about 1056, he writes, along with Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, to Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl, complaining that he had been forced to pay 65 dinars in Mahdiyya, due to the undermined state of security there, and had been close to death. A letter from David to Nehorai b. Nissim, dating from about the same time, deals principally with the silk trade. In a letter apparently written long before, he writes of trade in pearls, clothing, silk, and so forth. In additional letters, he discusses the shipment of paper, cloth, spices, and antimony (*kuhl*). In about 1060, his brother Ḥayyim writes to Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī of the disaster which befell the ship owned by a certain Sūdān (which apparently sank); Ḥayyim states that all the goods aboard that ship were lost, "and my brother (that is, David) traveled in it and came out naked, and lost all he had with him". Later in the same letter: "And my brother came to me naked, and his wife with him; may God grant him replacements". A passage of a letter from David to Nehorai b. Nissim contains an urgent request made by David to Nehorai, that the latter hurry and buy (apparently with money left with him by David) oil for the synagogue in Dammūh, apparently as a means of obtaining divine mercy regarding some distress afflicting David. In another letter to Nehorai, he writes of copying a Bible (*muṣṣhaf*).³³⁰

(331) Among the personalities and families staying in Sicily or expelled therefrom, let us also note the family of IBN KASHKĪL, a Spanish family which wandered first to Sicily and from there to Palestine, settling in Acre. Mentioned as having belonged to this family are the biblical commentator Moses b. Joseph and his brother.

³³⁰ B. ʿEzrūn (Ezra): see e.g. 462, b; the hypothesis advanced by Ben-Sasson, *Siṣīliya*, 123 (in his note to l. 6), that this is allegedly ʿAmmār b. Joshua al-Ḥalabī, mentioned in 236, a, l. 59, is unfounded. The death of ʿAmmār is mentioned in two letters: 639, a, l. 28 (the continuation of that letter seems to indicate that he died in Jerusalem); 749, b, l. 4. The information on the time of ʿAmmār's death enables us to date two letters written by ʿAvōn b. Šedāqā; see them in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 218-229 (nos. 497, 498). In the first of these, ʿAmmār is mentioned with the blessing for the deceased; the *rayyis* mentioned therein is therefore not Joseph ha-Kohen b. Solomon, but Daniel b. ʿAzariah, who died in August 1062. The date of no. 497 would therefore be 5 February 1064; that of 498, 3 April 1064. In about 1055, ʿAmmār was still active in the hides and textile business. In his letter: 651, b, l. 22, his son Ḥayyim mentions a partnership concluded by his father in these areas of business. It thus seems that, in the mid-1050s, his sons were the active partners in the business. The three sons of ʿAmmār—Abū Naṣr Daʿūd, Zakkār, and Abū Zikrī Ḥayyim—are mentioned in a letter by Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, written from Mahdiyya in about 1045: 359. Zakkār: 549, a, l. 12 (oil, Abraham b. Farrāh); 751, a, l. 24 (oil, Salāma b. Mūsā, September 1064); 654 (1069), b, l. 11 (brazilwood); 789, b, ll. 10, 12 (Šemaḥ: Zakkār stayed in Māzar; advance payment for lead); 356, c, l. 5 (Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, 1057, payments to Zakkār); 745, a, l. 26 (Salāma b. Mūsā requires assistance in Egypt). For his extensive travels to the Maghrib and Egypt, see e.g. 617, a, ll. 14, 57 (Labrāt b. Moses ibn Sughmār, from Mahdiyya; 9 January 1058). The letters of Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār: 650-654; the silver spoon: 652, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 315f. Trade in pearls: 295b. (Nehorai); 359, ll. 23, 35 (Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī); 563, a, l. 5 (Joseph b. Khalfa). Flax: 617, a, l. 44 (Labrāt ibn Sughmār). Nissim b. Isaac: 393, including details on trade relations with Sicily. ʿAvōn: in Gil, above in this note (no. 497). David b. ʿAmmār with Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: 462; to Nehorai: 656. Dammūh: 658; copying the Bible: 657; see also 655, 659. The disaster at sea: 654, a, ll. 5-12, b, l. 3. "Ben ʿEzrūn" became a sort of family name; thus, for example, we find: Daʿūd ben ʿEzrūn (leaving out the name of David's father, ʿAmmār): 552, a, l. 19.

The leaders of the 'Babylonian' community in Fustat, ABRAHAM B. SAHLĀN AND HIS SON SAHLĀN, originally also came from Sicily from "the sons of SANBĀT"; the supposed Sicilian origin of the family is attested to by: (1) a fragment of a letter written by a son to his father (as it should be understood) "Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Sanbāt al-Siqillī" (in Arabic script); (2) a receipt for poll tax (so it seems) paid by "Ibrāhīm b. Sanbāt al-Ṣayyāgh Maghribī Yahūdī" (in Arabic script as well), dated to Ramaḍān 442, January-February 1051 (al-Ṣayyāgh, the goldsmith, cf. Barhūn [=Abraham] b. Sahlān *ṣayrāfā* [Aramic: the goldsmith], in an act of court of 1028); (3) a letter of Samuel b. Ibrāhīm, from Fustat, to his father "Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm known as Shabbetai; of blessed memory" (in Arabic script), in Siqilliyya, i.e., Palermo; perhaps at least nos. 2 and 3, are addressed to another member of the family, not Abraham b. Sahlān, may be a cousin of his; but, certainly, it is that same family, Ibn Sanbāt, that we have before us.

A central Jewish personality living on the island in the mid-eleventh century was MAṢLIAḤ B. ELIA, known as Ibn al-Baṣāq, the *dayyān* of Sicily. Preserved in the Geniza is a letter from (assumedly) his mother, the widow of Elia al-Dimunishī, writing from Raghūs (Ragusa) in Sicily to her son Judah in Fustat. The identification of the writer is based on the fact that Maṣliaḥ did indeed have a brother Judah, whom we know to have left Sicily for Fustat, in about 1055. The mother writes in about 1060—perhaps after Maṣliaḥ's death, as she does not mention him, although she mentions other brothers, including Abū Yūsuf, who married in Syracuse. In her letter, she implores Judah to come home: "I adjure you by God... from the moment you read my letter, set out and come no matter what, before I die... for your father, peace be upon him, died while you were absent... and (therefore say to yourself) will my mother (also) die while I am absent?", etc. The addressee of the letter is: Judah son of the late Elia al-Dimunishī. If my assumption is correct and the letter does indeed relate to the family of Maṣliaḥ, it proves that that family originated in or near Dimunish. Maṣliaḥ was known by the appellation Ibn al-Baṣāq, for which I find no satisfactory explanation. Maṣliaḥ's father was with him in Fustat in about 1050, as indicated by a greeting sent by 'Ayyāsh b. Ṣedaqa of Alexandria in his letter to Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī in Fustat, "to my lord and master Maṣliaḥ, may God grant him peace... and to his father, greetings".

In the days of his youth (or so it appears), Maṣliaḥ spent some time with Hayy Gaon in Baghdad, and later wrote a sort of biographical treatise about him, for Samuel ibn Naghrila, the Spanish *nagid*. This is also indicated in other sources. The *Muḥāḍara* of Moses Ibn Ezra, speaking about the possibility that new things may be made known in song, and also in other kinds of writings, as revealed in dreams says: "...such as R. Hayy Gaon, of blessed memory, told in his name by R. Maṣliaḥ, *dayyān* of Siqilliyya, who was present there (in Baghdad) when he was his pupil, and it is written among the things that he wrote about the biography of this gaon for the *nagid* R. Samuel, of blessed memory. And these are his words: that gaon found a word of (Saadia) al-Fayyūmī, of blessed memory, in one of his *be'āyōt* (meaning, apparently, 'queries'), and did not know what its meaning was nor what he had intended by it. And (the significance of) that word troubled him, but he fell asleep, and saw him, that is, R. Saadia, in his

dream, and he asked him about it, in the Aramaic language to which the two were accustomed, and the latter directed him, and addressed him to the book from whence the entire meaning of that word would become clear; and indeed, as he directed him, so it was”.

In another place, the end of Joseph b. Judah Ibn ‘Aqnīn’s commentary to the Song of Songs, the commentator speaks of Samuel ha-Nagid’s commentary to the Bible, *kitāb al-istighnā*’ (which Moses Ibn Ezra calls “The book of riches”, but a more accurate translation is “The book of sufficement”, or “the book which suffices”), after having mentioned what Saadia Gaon says in his Arabic commentary to the Bible, which is the saying of the sages:

Anyone who says a word of wisdom, even from among the gentiles, is called a sage (BT *megillā* 16a): “and the late *nagid* said such things in *kitāb al-istighnā*”, after having quoted many of the commentaries of the Christians, that R. Maṣliāḥ b. al-Baṣāq, *dayyān* of Siqīlī’a, spoke with him when he came from Baghdad, about an epistle which he wrote about the life of our master Hayy Gaon, of blessed memory, and his excellent and exemplary acts. And among others, he stated therein that, on a certain day, the yeshiva discussed the verse *shemen ro’sh al yānī’ ro’shī* (the King James Version: “it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head”; Psalms 141:5), and the participants were divided as to its interpretation. Then our master Hayy, of blessed memory, instructed R. Maṣliāḥ to go to the *catholicos* (*jāthaliq*) of the Christians and ask him for his opinion on the interpretation of that verse, but (Maṣliāḥ) objected to this, and when he (R. Hayy Gaon), of blessed memory, saw that it was difficult for R. Maṣliāḥ (to accept it), the gaon, of blessed memory, objected to his opinion and said: Were not our righteous and holy forefathers and ancestors accustomed to inquire about words and their interpretations among the gentiles, and even among the herders of sheep and cattle, which is a renowned fact and known to us by tradition; and then he (Maṣliāḥ), of blessed memory, went to him (to the *catholicos*) and asked him and he told him that in their book, in his Syriac (*al-suryānī*) language, (the verse) is: *mishḥā de-reshī’ē lā ‘ad rēshēh* (= “the oil of the wicked will not anoint his head”).

Also mentioned is a query which Maṣliāḥ (asked?) Hayy Gaon concerning *sheḥitā*, and the gaon’s responsum tended to be a lenient one. In an anonymous commentary to the Psalms, relating to verse (103:5, *ha-masbī’a ba-tōv ‘edyēkh* (the King James Version: “who satisfieth thy mouth with good things”), in which he interprets the word *‘edyēkh* as “your mouth”, basing himself on Psalms 32:9: *‘edyō livlōm* (the King James Version: “whose mouth must be held in”), the anonymous author notes that that interpretation was taken from Hayy Gaon, and quoted by Samuel ha-Nagid, as told to him by “the late R. Maṣliāḥ b. al-Baṣāq”, who had heard it while he was staying with the gaon; and Samuel ha-Nagid had shown Maṣliāḥ that the gaon had also interpreted it that way in his *kitāb al-ḥawī*.

Maṣliāḥ’s stay in Baghdad with Hayy Gaon is also mentioned in a portion of a Parma manuscript dealing with customs of Rosh Hashana, and how Hayy acted in that connection, according to what was “written in the epistle of R. Maṣliāḥ son of R. Elia of Siqilliyya which was written about our master Hayy”, etc.

This treatise by Maṣliāḥ seems to have included interpretations of talmudic words which he received from Hayy Gaon, some of which

reached the *ʿArukh* of Nathan b. Yehiel, who heard them directly from Mašliah, as he noted in the entry אנפקיטן: “and I learned from R. Mašliah, of blessed memory, that (אנפקיטן) means: he blackened the hair”.³³¹

(332) There is also mention of Mašliah’s two sons (or two of his sons), Abū’l-Faḍl and Abū’l-Ḥasan. Ismaʿīl b. Farah, writing from Alexandria in

³³¹ The Ibn Kashkīl family: see Gil, *Hist.*, 190f., including references and more details. Abraham b. Sahlān: *ibid.*, 591f. See on the matter of the Ibn Sanbāt family: *ibid.*, 591f. and n. 79, where the details regarding Barhūn b. Sahlān Sayrāfā are mentioned; see also above, sec. 112; see TS AS 180.92, the letter fragment, in ʿAodeh’s dissertation, no. 12; the receipt (*barāʾa*), *ibid.*, no. 14: MS JNUL 4°577.2/24; the letter of Samuel b. Ibrahim: 846; cf. Ben-Sasson, *Siṣīliya*, 185ff. (no. 45) and the different readings, in my notes to 846. The letter of Umm al-Khayr: 798 (as I noted there in the note, *ḥadra* should be read as *ḥasra*). The name Ibn Baṣaḳ in the Geniza letters: 246, l. 24; 775, a, l. 15. The name al-Baṣaḳ (whose exact vocalisation we do not know) may have been an Arabic distortion of *al-pōsēq* (Hebrew *pōsēq* = “maker of legal decisions” + Arabic prefix), meaning that the man was an expert in Halacha. ʿAyyāsh: 483, a, margin, top. Elia b. Judah b. Yahyā is known to us from a letter which he wrote from Alexandria to Lādhīqiyya, which contained (inter alia) information on Ibn al-Baʿbāʿs ship; and from a portion of a letter which he wrote to Nehorai, containing details on purchases and payments, inter alia for silk (including also *lāsīn*). It is obvious that this Elia was a Sicilian Jew; nor is it impossible that he was Mašliah’s father. See 705, 706. The *Muḥāḍara* is quoted in Steinschneider, *JZWL*, 2 (1863), 301 (he translates *al-nabaḥī* as *chaldäisch*). See this passage in Moses Ibn Ezra, ed. Halkin, 124-126. The fragment from Ibn ʿAqnīn’s commentary to the Song of Songs was first edited by Steinschneider, in Ersch & Gruber, *Allgem. Enc.* (vol. 31, 1855), 56, n. 87. See also: Neubauer, *JA*, 5^e sér., t. 20 (1862), 214ff. He compares with the Peshitta: *mishḥā de-reshīʿē lā nadhan le-rēshīʿ*, and believes that Ibn ʿAqnīn had distorted the text; see the Syriac Bible, ed. S. Lee, 1824. Their translation is in line with that of the Septuagint: “the oil of the wicked shall not anoint my head”. Thus also R. David Qimḥī *ad loc.* (ed. Darom, Jerusalem 1966/7); See also Steinschneider, *JZWL* (see above in this note), who explained that the correct reading is *naḥn*, as in the Peshitta; see also Grätz, *Gesch.*, VI, 2-3. See Ibn ʿAqnīn, ed. Halkin, 494. See also Samuel B. Hophni, *Pērūsh*, 316f., to Genesis 47:31 (על ראש הַמֶּתָּה) where Samuel b. Hophni notes the error of the Christian commentators, who read רִמְטָה; (King James’ version: “upon the bed’s head”). See parallel examples quoted in n. 34 by the editor, who correctly believes that, like his son-in-law Hayy, Samuel b. Hophni was also familiar with the Christian commentaries. As noted by Hayy Gaon: “Our Lord and Master Samuel and his like, who often read the books of the gentiles”. See: *Responsa* (Lyck), no. 99 (fol. 31b). Greenbaum also quotes the Bodleian manuscript with the commentary of Judah ibn Bilʿam to Numbers 30:6, וְאִם הָיָה אִמְיָה (“but if her father disallow her”): “And our Master Hayy, of blessed memory, (wrote) in the *Hāwī* that it means ‘to prevent’ as in יִימָא רַאשִׁי מְנַע meaning ‘will not be prevented from my head’ (i.e. ‘will not stay off my head’).” This is in line with another version given by Ibn ʿAqnīn in MS JTS (New York; no. 1056), which reads *mishḥā de-reyshā* instead of *mishḥā de-reshīʿē*. In other words (in Syriac): “the oil of the head will not stay off my head”, a version in line with Hayy Gaon’s commentary quoted in Ibn Bilʿam; this is apparently the correct version. In matters of slaughter, Steinschneider, *JZWL* (see above, 303) has quoted an Oxford manuscript (which is MS Huntingdon 345, the latter having been owned by a certain Mūsā b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin): *risālat al-burhān fī tadhkīyyat al-hayawān* (a treatise on the rules of *sheḥīṭā*), fol. 124a. (Steinschneider’s reading of דָּבַח לְתַנְצִינָא should be emended to read דָּבַח לְתַנְצִינָא; דָּבַח לְתַנְצִינָא should be emended to read דָּבַח וְקָאֵל רַק אֵין; Ben-Sasson, *Siṣīliya*, 139: (וקאֵל רַק אֵין=אֵין אֵין רַק). See the doubts expressed by Abramson, *Inyānōt*, 123, as to whether this Mašliah was really Mašliah the *dayyān* of Sicily; see his further comments on Mašliah, 245f., n. 2. Commentary to the Psalms, see Harkavy, *MWJ*, 14 (1887), 198 (from a manuscript in Petersburg); see Harkavy in his notes in Grätz (Hebrew), IV, 5. See the fragment of MS Parma 166 printed by Lewin, *Ginzē q.*, 3 (1924/5), 67f. Nathan b. Yehiel, cf. Kohut in his introduction to the *ʿArukh*, p. XI, who states that Mašliah should be considered one of the teachers of Nathan b. Yehiel especially as regards Arabic and Persian words; and that Nathan b. Yehiel mentions him in seven places in the *ʿArukh*. See on Mašliah also in Steinschneider, *Ar. Lit.*, no. 85; Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 435.

November 1056, announces that the son of the *dayyān al-siqillī* had reached Alexandria; this may be assumed to refer to the son of Maṣliḥ, as we know of no other *dayyān* in Sicily. Jacob b. Ismaʿīl, writing from Sicily several years later, announces that Abū'l-Faḍl, the son of the *dayyān*, was going to Spain on business. Salāma b. Mūsā al-Safāquṣī mentions Abū'l-Ḥasan, the son of *al-rabb al-siqillī*, in 1064.

It is obvious from the merchants' letters that Maṣliḥ's main occupation was not in judicial matters, but in commerce. A court document written in 1046 in Fustat mentions him many times. This is a memorandum regarding a disaster at sea, in which a number of merchants from Dimunish (believed to be the place of origin of Maṣliḥ's family, as shown above) drowned. Maṣliḥ had been shipping merchandise for one of those merchants from Dimunish, and had even sold goods for him; the document deals with the transfer of money from the sale of those goods to the partner of the drowned merchant, who held an absolute power of attorney signed by the deceased. Maṣliḥ is mentioned again in a deed of credit also belonging to the same incident, written on 15 December 1046. Maṣliḥ's great involvement in business is evident in a letter written in Palermo by Ḥayyib b. ʿAmmār in about 1055, which indicates that it was customary to send merchandise to Sicily as if it belonged to Maṣliḥ, in order to evade the import tax, the *ʿushr*, as we have seen. We also find information on his travels: Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, writing from Alexandria, notes that Maṣliḥ set sail in the *qunbār* belonging to the *amīr*—that is, in a ship owned by Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz, ruler of Ifrīqiya. He was bound for Tripoli in Libya, and was accompanied by his brother (Judah), as well as by Maymūn (b. Khalfa). In another letter, the same Mūsā notes that he sent 700 dinars with Maṣliḥ to Fustat. ʿAṭā b. Zikrī, also writing from Alexandria at about the same time, asks Ibn al-Baṣaq (that is, Maṣliḥ) to authenticate his signature on documents in Fustat, from which we learn that Maṣliḥ was in Fustat at the time. Nehorai b. Nissim writes of sending his own goods in loads belonging to Maṣliḥ, in 1058 and again in 1061. In an accounting list drawn up in 1065, Nehorai notes that he sent shoes for R. Maṣliḥ.

The heirs of Yannai b. Nahum al-Baradānī, Joseph and Nahum, appoint "R. Maṣliḥ, son of R. Elia Siqillī" as their representative to collect the share owed them from the estate of their father, which was being held by Hillel b. Isaac, in Palestine. This implies that Maṣliḥ was also visiting there, and came to Ramla to meet that Hillel and clarify the matter of the debt.

The Sicilian authorities showed Maṣliḥ no preferential treatment when they imprisoned the Sicilian merchants who had been abetting non-residents in evading taxes by importing goods in their own names. Maymūn b. Khalfa, writing from Palermo to Nehorai b. Nissim on 18 August 1056, notes at the end of his letter: "This week, the *dayyān* R. Maṣliḥ and Master Abū Yūsuf (perhaps Jacob b. Ismaʿīl al-Andalusī), and Master Abū'l-Faḍl b. Khalaf, and Master Abū'l-Bishr Sulaymān b. Saul, and R. Muṭahhar, are in prison for the last three days, because of the *māʿasēr* (= *ʿushr*, tithe)". Further in his letter, he adds that efforts are being made on their behalf, and asks that all merchants be publicly informed and told not to endanger themselves (i.e. not to go to Sicily?). This is the only place in the Geniza letters where Maṣliḥ is clearly referred to as the *dayyān*. Were it not for

this reference, one might doubt whether the *dayyān* was actually Mašliḥ or Elia his father, as the phrase we usually find in these letters, "Mašliḥ son of Elia, *dayyān* of Sicily", is misleading; in those days, it would have been more usual to write "Mašliḥ, *dayyān* of Sicily, son of Elia".

Isaac b. ʿAlī Majjānī, in a letter written from Mahdiyya in about 1039, mentions a halachic responsum given by Mašliḥ, along with a responsum of Rabbēnū Ḥananel. The addressee of that letter, Abūʾl-Faḍl, Mašliḥ's father-in-law, had promised to handle a legal controversy to which the said Isaac was one of the parties. Isaac now writes: "I have a responsum from Rabbēnū Ḥananel, and a responsum from your son-in-law R. Mašliḥ, which I have read, and he says: You are surely entitled to have your money returned to you, for two reasons", etc.; and further: "thus (also) ruled Rabbēnū Ḥananel".

Jacob b. Ismaʿīl, in a letter written from Palermo to Yushaʿ b. Nathan in Fustat in about 1050, notes: "You wrote that you sent me the quire of queries (*daraj al-masāʿil*) belonging to R. Mašliḥ, but I have not received anything from you, because you said: I shall copy it and I shall give it to you, but I left you and you did not give me anything; you will find it with you; you may find it proper to do a favour and hand over (the queries) to Master Abū Zikrī (i.e. Judah), the brother of R. Mašliḥ", etc. We cannot know for certain if these were queries presented to Mašliḥ and his responsa thereto, or rather a quire of queries and responsa of the geonim which had belonged to him.

Information on the death of Mašliḥ is included in a letter (mentioned several paragraphs above) written from Palermo by this same Jacob b. Ismaʿīl to Nehorai b. Nissim in about 1056. As we have seen, Jacob b. Ismaʿīl wrote in that letter that Mašliḥ's son, Abūʾl-Faḍl, was going to Spain. Toward the end of the letter, he notes: "We had the disaster with the late R. Mašliḥ, of blessed memory", with no additional details. The *dayyān* of Sicily, then, died some 15 years before the Jews of the island entered a new and very different era—that of Christian rule in Sicily.³³²

³³² Ismaʿīl b. Farah: 495, a, l. 12. Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 315. Jacob b. Ismaʿīl: 576, a, l. 21. Abūʾl-Faḍl was also the *kunya* of Mašliḥ's father-in-law (*shir*); see the letter of Isaac b. ʿAlī al-Majjānī, from Mahdiyya, about 1039: 635, b, l. 10; the son may have been named for his maternal grandfather, but we do not know their names, only their appellations. Salāma b. Mūsā: 751, b, ll. 1-2. The court document: 821. The deed of the credit: 822. Mūsā b. Abīʾl-Ḥayy: 447, a, l. 7; 450, a, margin. ʿAṭā: 775. Nehorai: 282, II, l. 19; 294, d, l. 11; 296, d, l. 4. The sons of al-Baradānī: in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 26f. (no. 426); the time given by me there should apparently be put earlier, to about 1060. The imprisonment: 561, b, ll. 26-28. Isaac b. ʿAlī: 635, b, ll. 10-12. Jacob b. Ismaʿīl: 575, a, ll. 31-33; cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, I, 52; II, 338. 635, a, l. 6, mentions "Mašliḥ of blessed memory"; in the case of Mašliḥ b. Elia, however, the abbreviation *z.l.* cannot be interpreted as the blessing for the deceased, therefore it may refer to another Mašliḥ. Mašliḥ's decease: 576, b, line 15.

PART FOUR

THE JEWS IN THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD
IN THE GEONIC PERIOD

CHAPTER ONE

AGRICULTURE; LAND ASSETS

(333) The general impression, especially from the talmudic sources, is that before the Islamic period most Jews, both in Palestine and the Diaspora, earned their livelihood from agriculture. As regards Egypt, this impression is strengthened by the papyri relating to the Jews; as for Babylonia, sufficient are the many, many issues dealing with land, water, trees, etc., in the Babylonian Talmud. However, there is no doubt that already in ancient times there were groups of Jews who specialized in commerce, such as the silk merchants mentioned in the Talmud; the impression is, that the merchants known as Rādhānites, about whom we know from an AD ninth century source, had their roots in ancient times, in the pre-Islamic period (below, sec. 341). There is no doubt that with the rise of Islam and the development of the new empire, a process of urbanization took place for some time, implying that there was an abandonment of the villages and the land and a move to the big cities that developed under the new regime. Nevertheless, it is a salient fact that this was not an absolute and total abandonment, and we still have information about Jewish farmers and agricultural lands owned by Jews. The Islamic regime's general pattern was not to harm land ownership rights, nor rights on urban land and buildings. Elsewhere, I have dealt with the information regarding Palestine and Egypt. Here I will elaborate, especially through a survey of the information contained within the geonic responsa and some other sources.

In one query, the gaon was asked about "a Jew who had oxen and horses and donkeys, and who could not let them graze in the city; may he let a gentile herdsman outside the Sabbath boundary graze them, and that on Sabbaths and holidays they stay with him?" The gaon rules that it was forbidden, but had recourse to the Babylonian Talmud (*Bēṣā* 30a) "better a Jew err than transgress willfully". The anonymous "grandson of Ṭōv" (Naḥshōn?), writing to Spain in 953, complains: "the lands we once owned are desolate and were lost in those bad years that we endured. Our money and our land are gone". In a query asked of Hayy Gaon regarding irrigating on the Sabbath, we read: "...we have gardens and orchards including 'white' fields (i.e., not plantations) and a field of trees....". A case of tenancy, in land a Jew bought in partnership with a non-Jew, is mentioned in another query, apparently also addressed to Hayy Gaon: "a Jew and a gentile who took a field in partnership", where some of the land can only be watered on the Sabbath, which is "a law that cannot be transgressed since ancient times", and it is the tenants, who are not Jews, that do the irrigation work. In his responsum, the gaon was mindful of the querier, but apprehensive of setting a precedent: if the lands were far away "where Jews do not arrive" (i.e., Jews would not know about it)—then it is permitted, if they are nearby—it is forbidden. Land on which there was an *akargā* are

mentioned in a responsum of Sheshnā Gaon (around 670); clearly this has to do with the *kharāj*, the land tax, ergo, agricultural land. Naḥshōn Gaon was asked (around 670) about a “a Jew who took (=bought) a field from someone and his deed of sale was lost”. Samuel b. Hophni was queried about the lands of a female orphan who “wrote to the owner of those lands”.

An anonymous geonic responsum deals with the issues of the Fās exiles (above, sec. 117) after “another ruler conquered it and confiscated all lands and houses, and vineyards and inns”. A query to Naḥshōn Gaon tells of a man who departed overseas and mortgaged lands to a gentile. Rabbēnū Gershom, in his commentary on *Bāvā Batrā* 168b, knew something about events in Islamic lands: “Ishmaelites who would help the king when he went out to war, and were wont to tarry with him in his kingdom for a long time, and then return to their place, came with him to Pumbedita and he gave them permission to collect the land tax of people around the city so that they have a livelihood there from them all year long” etc. I.e., this is a *ma’kala*, or *iqṭāʿ*, allocating the tax collection in an area to one of the tribes; even though Rabbēnū Gershom Light of the Exile may perhaps be projecting this onto the Sasanid period.³³³

(334) Vineyards are especially prominent in the agricultural endeavors. Naṭrūnai Gaon permits ploughing and trimming on the intermediate days of the Sukkot and Passover festivals, and one need not necessarily employ gentiles “so that there be no loss”. He adds a reason: “for most of the local people have no capital aside from their vineyards”. Hayy Gaon dealt with an issue regarding “Reuben (=a certain man) married a woman who brought him fields and houses and vineyards, then she converted to Christianity” (the gaon rules that the property of that woman be returned to her heirs, i.e., to her father’s family; or perhaps the half of it also to her husband). Paṭṭoi Gaon permitted vintage and stomping grapes on the intermediate days of the festivals, if a situation suddenly arose by which the farmer would incur loss if this was not done; “however, if the intention from the beginning was to do it in the holiday (the intermediate days), it is

³³³ See my discussion on agriculture and land ownership in the period presently surveyed, in my *Hist.*, 224-229, and on land ownership in Egypt, in my *Documents*, 79-81. More than a few additional details on agricultural estates owned by Jews, as well as on various dealings in real estate and properties can also be found there. Entrusting livestock to a gentile shepherd: *Tesh. geon. qadm.*, 32b, (no. 92), from among Nissim b. Jacob’s queries to Hayy Gaon; the version in the BT: “let them be erring, but not by purpose”; see in the *Responsa ibid.*, 8b (no. 44), a query about the cultivation of seeds or vegetables in a vineyard. The grandson of Tōv: 13, vii. The query to Hayy Gaon: *Tōrātān shel ri’sh.*, II, 57 (no. 3); the matter of irrigation: *Resp. Lyck*, no. 65. *Akargā: Resp. Sha’arē š.*, 46b (no. 14). Acquisition of a field, *ibid.*, 53a (no. 53); the orphan: *ibid.*, 45b (no. 7), and also see *ibid.* 48a-b (no. 24); the Fās exiles: Assaf, *Ginzē q.*, 5 (1933/4), 108, from MS Sassoon no. 593. Naḥshōn Gaon: *Tesh. geon. qadm.*, no. 51. R. Gershom: in the *Tōsāfōt* to the BT (mentioned here in the main text), referring to the passage: “the matter of these Arabs who came to Pumbedita and robbed people’s fields, and the owners applied to Abayē, he said to them: my Master, please show the deeds”, etc. What those Jewish farmers requested was that he write another deed for them concerning the field, so that if they were forced to hand it over, an additional deed would remain with them. Abayē at first refused, since one does not write two deeds for one piece of land, but solved the problem by instructing the scribe to write them a deed with a note saying that it was not valid, and what is written is voided, as the witnesses are named on the same sheet, which is not permitted”. Cf. Szadunski, *AJSL*, 49 (1932/3), 336f.

forbidden even if a loss is anticipated". Naṭrūnai Gaon gives priority (so it would seem) to someone who mortgaged his vineyard over a debt of 50 dinars, and who sought to work it as tenant: "...the owner of the vineyard may accept the tenancy, on the usual conditions of tenancy". There are problems with vineyards also in the letter of a *dayyān* in Alexandria, Yeshū'a ha-Kohen *he-ḥāvēr* b. Joseph (about 1047), but the issue is somewhat unclear. It was a matter of purchase of ownership of a vineyard held (in tenancy?) by a Christian by the name of Abū'l-Khayr b. Ḥanūn, who supplies grapes to the distinguished people of Alexandria. This person, the letter says, hates Yeshū'a b. Joseph "as if he himself had killed the messiah". There was a mediation attempt by "*al-amīr* Abū Maṣṣūr"; possibly al-Dizbirī, the Turkish commander of the Fatimid army is meant.

Another special agricultural issue mentioned in the responsa of the geonim was raising silkworms; the queriers note that "our predecessors used to feed the worm on the holidays but not on the Sabbath". Mattathias Gaon rules that there is no difference between them and other animals, for they are dependent on their owners for their food, "their food is your responsibility since they cannot fly around looking for it".

Regarding urban land, we find, as stated above, the issue of the possession of houses, while the legal status of the land upon which they were constructed, is not clear. It seems that in Fustat the state, or regime, owned the land, at least in theory, if not in fact; in all events we find in the Geniza broad confirmation of the fact that house owners were required to pay a *ḥikr*, a land leasing fee. However, it seems that this situation was only characteristic of Egypt, because there is no documentary confirmation of its existence anywhere else. In Baghdad there was the matter of a writ of the Court regarding the heirs of Bahbūd b. Nāṭir, at about 940, and also what Nathan the Babylonian relates about the controversy between Saadia Gaon and the exilarch David b. Zakkai regarding the inheritors of *ḥasērōt* (=residence houses), where much money was at stake (above, sec. 144).

In a letter written by Joseph al-Baradānī, in August 999, from Qayrawān, to the gaon Samuel b. Hophni, he mentions a power of attorney (*wakāla*) that he sent to his relative Abū Maṣṣūr regarding his houses in Baghdad. One of the geonim dealt with a query about the lease of buildings meant for use by the public or many people, who are not Jews: "...what does it mean to lease an inn and bakery and a bath house to a gentile year after year"; the gaon only permits leasing of the inn, because work did not take place there, the others are forbidden, except if there is a condition that on the Sabbath day they belong to the renter and that the income of the Sabbath and the weekdays not be mixed together.

The people of those generations were well aware of the transition taking place from agriculture and the holding of rural estates to the urban concentrations. The urbanization that came with the establishment of a new, broader, world, that of the Islamic empire, led to waves of Jewish migration from country to country, also from the villages and small towns to the big cities. Aside from this factor, which can be referred to as the positive factor, there is no doubt that the unending wars, riots and rebellions that are characteristic of this period, also the heavy tax burden on the farmers, along with the phenomena of general destruction, such as the decline of the irrigation systems in the area of Babylonia, also contributed

greatly to the acceleration of this process. However, the transition was not all-encompassing and absolute, it only included a part, albeit a significant part, of the Jewish population—and it may even be assumed that it encompassed most of the Jewish population—whereas there was still part of it that continued living in the villages and small towns and even earn their livelihood from agriculture, as we saw in the above examples. This is how the gaon Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob saw it at the beginning of the ninth century: “because here most people do not possess land estates, our Sages established a *taqqānā* (statute), in order not to make loans impossible”, etc. This, of course, refers to those regulations where there was a recognition of the legal and administrative meaning of movable goods, i.e., kinds of merchandise and even monies, in distinction from the earlier views that only land property could be recorded in deeds and acts of the *bēt dīn*. In all events, we saw that the gaon spoke of “most of the people,” not all of them. In a responsum ascribed to Naṭrūnai Gaon and Palṭoi Gaon, i.e., about a generation later, we read: “judges where we live still impose oaths in matters of land just as in matters of movable property”. From the halachic standpoint, a change first took place in this area a generation after the Abbasid revolution, in the 780s. Beyond that, the inclusion of movable goods in issues of ownership and transfer of ownership, was somewhat worrisome for the Babylonian geonim. The common view, reflected in contemporary deeds, was to include in the deed formula that the transaction was being made together with the four ells of land (that every Jew had) in Palestine, according to a regulation ascribed to Hillai Gaon. Hayy Gaon, in one of his responsa, explains that this custom, to mention in the deed the four ells of land in Palestine, was valid in power of attorney writs, but not in transfer of land: “regarding someone who bought a coin allegedly together with land, relying on what he had in Palestine, we have not found anything like it in the Mishnā or in the Talmud, neither anything similar to it.... in this matter, the custom of the Babylonian yeshiva (as it should be read) is that one does not rely on the share of land in Palestine.... It is rather necessary to own land, in order that the lender be able to collect the money, and claim it; only in power of attorney and agency are our scholars more limited (and permit).... land of one’s share in Palestine; but in matters of attorney deeds our scholars are more indulgent” (and accept mention of the four ells) “in Palestine”. The gaon cites the view of Yehudai Gaon and that of Saadia Gaon: “land from one’s share in Palestine was accepted only in deeds of attorney, but not in any real acquisition of property”.

The halachic change is also reflected in the obligation to collect the *ketubbā* monies (also) from movable goods, that was instituted towards the end of the eighth century. This halachic development undoubtedly reflects the new reality that was gradually created after about 100 years of Muslim rule, which was mainly a process of urbanization undergone by the Jewish population. Nevertheless, Jews are still mentioned as living in villages, such as in the responsum of Isaac Ṣemaḥ Gaon, regarding a village where there was only one Jew, if it was permitted to drink the wine of this Jew, and the response is positive, on condition that he has “a key and a seal” (i.e., a locked place and a written authorization). A Jew with a flour mill is mentioned in a responsum ascribed to Naṭrūnai and Palṭoi. A responsum of the geonim Sherira and Hayy abrogates the reliance on the *qāḏī*’s ruling

where it regards matters of Jews living “in distant villages” (as it should be read). In a responsum the matter of cheese without ‘a seal’ sent by a Jew living in a village ten miles from Qayrawān, is mentioned. It was sent in a sealed container, with a gentile, along with “a note to the receiver.... you should know that I have sent to you such-and-such quantity of cheese via so-and-so the gentile, and that each and every cake of cheese has a seal in Hebrew script: *berākḥā* (blessings)”; and the gaon permits it.³³⁴

³³⁴ Natrūnai Gaon: *Ge'onē mizr. u-m.*, no. 88; the woman who converted: *ibid.*, no. 87; Paltoi Gaon: *Resp. Lyck*, no. 6. Cf. *Ōṣar ha-g.* to *Mashqīn* (the responsa), 14f.; some ascribe it to Sar Shālōm Gaon. Tenancy of a vineyard: *Shaf'arē ṣ.*, 39a-b (no. 14). Alexandria: 671, b, lines 5-10. Cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 123; II, 281. Silkworms: *Shaf'arē tesh.*, 22 (no. 230). The matter of the *ḥikr* was discussed by me elsewhere: *Docs.*, 87f. Al-Baradānī's letter: 58, b, ll. 2-3; leasing a *funduq*, etc., *Ge'onē mizrāḥ u-ma'ar.*, no. 55, and see Müller's notes *ibid.*; probably by the gaon Kohen Sedeq (b. Joseph); the responsum is ascribed in *Tesh. shel ri'sh.*, II, 57f. (no. 5) to Hayy Gaon, and in another version to Natrūnai Gaon. See also *Resp. Lyck*, no. 64, by Hayy Gaon: “it happens almost daily in Babylonia, that Jewish olive presses are leased to gentiles, and the sages do not oppose it”; see also *Hemdā gen.*, no. 10. Moses Gaon b. Jacob: *Hemdā gen.*, no. 65. Natrūnai and Paltoi: *ibid.*, no. 22; cf. Assaf, *Teq. ha-g.*, 15; Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 309ff. Land in Palestine: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 93 (no. 200); it is related to BT *Qiddūshīn*, 26a-b, cf. *Ōṣar ha-g.* ad locum. See also 649, a deed of attorney, issued by David and Hayyim sons of 'Ammār, from Palermo, to Barhūn b. Moses al-Tāhīrtī, on 29 March 1052. It says there in line 6: “and I gave him four cubits of land as a gift”, etc. without mentioning “in Palestine”. Cf. Mann, *ibid.*, 361; Abramson, *Sinai*, 95 (1983/4), 51. Collecting the *ketubbā*: the responsum of Isaac Ṣemaḥ Gaon: *Hemdā gen.*, no. 117. The mill: *ibid.*, no. 10. Distant places: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 140 (no. 278). Cheese: *ibid.*, 3f. (no. 5). Cf. on the whole topic of agriculture, land and properties: Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 310-319; Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 116f.; see on agricultural matters in the Maghrib (Qābis) in: Ben-Sasson, in: *Communautés juives*, 279f.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAJOR OCCUPATIONS

(335) We have seen that most of the information about the Jews in agriculture and the villages comes from the geonic responsa, and very little—from Geniza documents; this is not surprising, since most of the documents and letters belong to the realm of the merchants and the financiers, it is they who wrote each other letters, and they take up the lion's share of the *bēt dīn* proceedings because they had most of the property and most of the transactions were between them, sometimes there were also quarrels that obligated them to appeal to the *battē dīn* to draw up deeds and for rulings regarding partnership issues, bequests, etc. To a great extent, there is an absence of information also regarding artisans; although less than for farmers.

The great Arabic writer al-Jāḥiẓ, writes in his polemical treatise, *al-radd ʿalā al-naṣāra* (response to the Christians), that all the Jews were dyers (i.e., of textiles), hide tanners, barbers (or: blood letters), butchers, and pitcher menders. Benjamin al-Nihāwandī, a contemporary of Jāḥiẓ and one of the leaders of the Karaites, mentions a number of Jewish occupations without claiming to be listing all of them, or including all of the Jews: "...the tailor and the fuller and the metal and copper and tin and lead smiths and the dyer and weaver, all artisans". Neither does the important describer of countries, al-Muqaddasī, claim to know what all the Jews, or most of them, engage in, but he does know that they are the majority of money-changers (*jahābidha*), dyers (of textiles), money changers (*ṣayārifa*) and hide tanners. Abū Nuʿaym, writing at the beginning of the eleventh century, notes that the Jews of al-Yahūdīya, the main part of Iṣfahān, deal in dirty work, such as barbering (or: blood-letting), tanning, flax laundering, or that they are butchers. Al-Bakrī, in the eleventh century, finds that in Sijilmāssa, founded in the mid-eighth century, the builders were Jews (implying: all the builders). We have seen from the Baghdadi diarist of 1069, Abū ʿAlī Ibn al-Bannāʾ, that in his day the coin minters were Jews; also in the twelfth century *nāẓir dār al-ḍarb*, the head of the Baghdad mint, was a Jew (above, sec. 275).

In ancient times dissociating from and separating oneself from those engaging in specific Jewish crafts was customary, because of the foul odors that clung to them because of their occupations. In the Babylonian Talmud (*Ḥagigā 4a*) we see that the "fuller and the coppersmith and the tanner are exempt from pilgrimage since exception was made to those 'males (that should) appear before the Lord' (but cannot; Deut. 16:16)... in other words those that you cannot stand being around". There is a commentary on this of one of the geonim; "why so.... we have seen that they cannot be changed because their skin absorbs a foul odor without remedy, and from the pores of their flesh a foul odor enters that cannot be removed. At that time there

was a custom that people separate from these craftsmen and would not sit with them or socialize with them and would keep their distance from them, therefore they had their own synagogues. That is still the case in some places....” etc. There was then another occupation that contemporaries knew as unique to the Jews, the manufacture of thin sheets of zinc or gold, “waters of gold” (below, sec. 355), just as Jews usually had exclusivity in the occupations dealing with metalwork, goldsmithy, jewelry craftsmanship, coin minting and money changing.

As for the dyers, i.e., textile dying, this was clearly a Jewish craft already in ancient times, as testified by R. Ishmael b. Yōḥānān b. Bārōqā, “the dyers set the dye work as a separate craft”. Al-Jāhīz says that only among the Jews can people be found who knew how to identify the crimson worm (*qirmiz*) found in the grass in Persia and Spain; we have seen (above, sec. 192) the matter of Bishr al-Marīṣī, about whom it was said that he was (in the second half of the eighth century) a Jewish dyer in Kūfa.

Tavern keeping (also, apparently, together with wine-making) is documented in Arabic literature, especially in poetry; like the poem on the *qātūl* (irrigation canal) near Qādisiyya, where there was a Jew who sold yellow (or: red?) wine, a likeable fellow, and where the horsemen went to spend their nights drinking, when the Jewish winemaker brings the vat within which is a promise of drunkenness. Also an event at the time of al-Manṣūr (included in the events of AH 153, AD 770), where the Muslims (soldiers?) were obliged to wear long headdresses, about which the poet Abū Dulāma writes: “we hoped that the caliph would give a supplement, but he increased the turbans. You see them on the heads of the soldiers, as if they put a turban on the jugs (of wine) of the Jews”. In the geonic responsa there are also allusions to the wine trade of the village Jews. In one of the responsa mentioned are *ḥānūt* (as it should be read) *al-ḥabīdh* (a wine shop, i.e., a tavern), and Ibn Ṣālīḥ al-Nabbādh (wine seller).³³⁵

(336) Mentioned in that same responsum are Joseph and °Aṭīyya *benē* (sons of) Jacob b. °Azriel Ṣā'igh, i.e. a gold and silver smith, a jeweler. The

³³⁵ See Jāhīz, *Rasā'il* (Beirut), III, 316; cf. al-Bustānī, *al-Mashriq*, 32 (1934), 429, who notes that it fits Jāhīz' period, but later Jews penetrated into trade as well. See Benjamin al-Nihāwandī, 4b; he writes there about the artisan's responsibility for the client's equipment; by saying fuller he meant a washer (or shrinker) of flax, and by dyer he meant a dyer of textiles. See Muqaddasī, *Āqālīm*, 183; cf. Mez, 35ff.; Gil, *Hist.*, 231; Abū Nu'aym, I, 17; Sijilmāssa: see also above, sec. 115, cf. *Istibṣār*, 148f.; the annotator of the *Istibṣār* knows (from his imagination) that when the Fatimid °Ubaydallah conquered the city he found that the Jews got rich by dishonest ways, so he killed their rich men and allowed the Jews to work in masonry only; but 'now' they are the traders of all these lands and the richest of all traders, and are popular among the Muslims. Exemptions from pilgrimage: MS Harkavy, in Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 93, which relates to BT *Ḥagīga*, 4a, where Rashi's commentary is not plausible. Cf. also *Ōṣar ha-g.* to *Ḥagīgā*, 1f. (no. 3). The *meqammēš* is undoubtedly the fuller, who shrinks and whitens the flax (Aramaic *qaṣṣārā*, Arabic *qaṣṣār*) and employs in his job ill-smelling materials; David b. al-Meqammēš (Muqammiš above sec. 208) was not the son of a shirt maker, as generally believed, but the son of a flax fuller; another interpretation of *meqammēš* is not plausible (see the entry in the °*Arūkh*). The dyers: Tōseftā, *Shabbāt*, 9:18. The crimson worm: Jāhīz, *Tabaṣṣur*, 339; cf. Gil, *Hist.* 245 n. 21. The tavern near Qādisiyya: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, IV, 16. See the poem of Jaḥza al-Barmakī, Abū Dulāma, in Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, III, 371. In these poems we find the term *dann*, a dug-in barrel (or a container) in order to prevent it from falling. Jews in villages: *Ḥemdā gen.*, nos. 113-117. The tavern: Ginzberg, *Ginzē S.*, II, 186 (TS Loan 154).

name of the craft, *al-sā'igh*, is often found alongside people's names in the Geniza writings, such as: Ibrahīm b. Maṣṣūr al-Šā'igh, mentioned in August 1023, in the Palestinian *bēṭ dīn*'s notebook. In the field of jewelry, we find the craft of perforating pearls (for stringing), the craftsman's name is: *thaqqāb*; in the late eleventh century, we find in an accounts' list of Nehorai b. Nissim, dealing mainly with ornamental objects, that an advance payment was made to the *thaqqābīn* (perforators); one of them returned the money because he was not working. There is also the case of a boy who was to learn the jewelry craft, true, it is a late document, from 1244, but learning this trade, which took some years, was certainly customary also in earlier periods.

A common occupation among the Jews was making sugar, which was prepared in the *maṭbakh*, the sugar refinery. The name, *al-Sukkarī* (sugar maker), is often found in the Geniza; it is impossible to determine when it is sugar making or sugar selling.

A Jewish occupation par excellence, was astrology. 'Abd al-Jabbār writes about Ishāq b. Fulayt the Jew, one of the main astrologers in Baghdad, whom many preferred over any other astrologer, and he names some of them; this is in the second half of the tenth century AD. In one of the geonic responsa we read about the *aṣṭralīb*, the astrolabe, "a round chart of copper or wood like those made by the sorcerers called *munajjimīn*". We have seen how Petahiah of Regensburg described the astrologer Solomon whom he met in Mosul (above, sec. 248). At about the mid-eleventh century, a Sicilian mentions Yaḥyā Ibn al-Munajjim, i.e., son of the astrologer, in a letter.

Many of the physicians were Jews, and we have already encountered a number of Jewish figures who were physicians by occupation. It appears that there was indeed a tendency among the people to trust Jewish physicians. 'Abd al-Jabbār writes about a physician by the name of Ḥasan, who was a *mulḥid* (heretic, one who deviated from the right religion), but pretended that he was a Jew. In general, it can be noted that physicians benefited from a preferred social status; a salient fact over the generations is the closeness to the rulers, of the Jewish physicians who treated them, and the opportunity openly given them to be spokesmen and intercessors for their people; usually, the *rā'īs al-yahūd*, head of the Jews, whose title among the Jews was *nagid*, came from among them. Thus, for example, there were figures who filled a central role in the lives of the Jews of Egypt, like Judah and Mevorakh the sons of Saadia and their descendants, starting with the second half of the eleventh century; Abū Maṣṣūr Samuel b. Ḥananiah, in the mid-twelfth century; then Maimonides and his descendants after him, beginning with the end of the twelfth century. In the Maghrib: the *negīdīm* Abraham b. 'Aṭā (Nathan) and Jacob b. 'Amram.

Jewish physicians, and along with them pharmacists as well, were knowledgeable and inventive regarding medicines. A geonic responsum, which may be of the geonim Sherira and Hayy, contains details about a type of *ṭiryāq*, kind of a universal drug: "...*ṭariyāqā* in which is mixed the flesh of a viper and the eggs of that animal that is called....(?) mix it with dry ground leavened bread, roll it into oven loaves and dry them with the other ingredients in the *ṭariyāqā*.... then knead it with honey.... its medicinal properties are good for people as an antidote for snake and scorpion

venom and those struck by *ḥalāl*” (a kind of rheumatism), etc. It is also permissible on Passover (when leavened bread is forbidden). Aḥmad al-Wansharīṣī notes that the people of Alexandria were forced, by having no other choice, to turn to the Jewish physicians who sold drugs.

In the commercial letters of the eleventh century, in my collection, a number of professionals are mentioned, some examples of which are as follows: *rakḥkhām*, a marblestone craftsman; *ḥajjār*, stonemason; a ship owner, a certain Tāhir, who was the official (*ghulām*) of Ibn al-Tabbār; *nūtī*, a sailor: *al-nūtī al-yahūdī*, the Jewish sailor; *fayj*, letter carrier: *al-fayj al-yahūdī*, the Jewish letter carrier. From this, of course, we see that most of the seamen and letter carriers were not Jews, otherwise why would the letter writers have noted their Jewishness. As for the term *ghulām*, it appears that it should not always be interpreted, as usual, as slave, it may perhaps also be an official, or assistant; Nissim b. Ḥalfōn, in one of his letters to Nehorai b. Nissim, mentions Abū'l-Bishr Salmān b. Da'ūd, the *ghulām* of Abū Maṣṣūr b. Saadia b. Ṣaghīr, referring to that *ghulām* as: *sayyidī*, my lord.³³⁶

What I have presented until now is enough to show that the Jewish population in the Islamic countries in that period was occupationally highly diversified, while there was still a stratum of farmers and land owners, both in the country and the city, and a great variety of occupations and craftsmen; one should add that, unfortunately, there is on this only relatively little information, while much information is available as regards the merchants and financiers. It was the merchants who wrote many letters to each other, while it is others who wrote about the most important financiers—in the chronicles, in the polemical literature, and the various legal and administrative documents—of which much has been preserved in the Geniza.

³³⁶ It is noteworthy that in line 18, the name is 'Azriel, whereas in line 23 he is called Ezra; cf. Ginzberg, *Ginzē S.*, II, 183; the court record: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 71 (no. 42, b, line 12). In my Geniza collection many are mentioned by the name of the jewelry craft, *al-ṣā'igh*, and see the index there; also: *thaqqābīn*: 284, d, line 1; cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 97. Learning the jewelry craft: TS 13 J 4, f. 7, cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, II, 191; III, 218, 472 n. 243. See more on goldsmiths and silversmiths: *idem*, *ibid.*, I, 85, 108, 365f. (nos. 17, 21). Sugar refineries, see Goitein, *ibid.*, I, 81, 89, 366f. (nos. 23, 25, 26); III, 14, 429 n. 86; Gil, *Docs.*, 71, and *idem*, *Hist.*, 227f. Astrologers: 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbūt*, I, 72f. See also Ashtor, *Zion*, 4 (1938/9), 55; Tritton, *MW*, 54 (1964), 105; Gil, *Docs.*, 185 n. 3. The astrolabe: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 11 (no. 28); Yahyā, the astrologer's son: 238, b, line 1. Ḥasan the physician: 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbūt*, II, 628, who tells about him that by blood-letting he caused the premature death of Jubbā'ī the Younger, 'Abd al-Salām b. Muḥammad (who, like his father, was one of the outstanding thinkers among the *mu'tazilīs*; he died in AD 933). See the copious information gathered by Goitein about physicians in his *Med. Soc.* volumes, look up 'physicians' in the index (Vol. VI) and especially vol. II, 133, 240-261. See Sadan, *Ayalon Pres. Vol.*, 362f., citing details on the important part played by Christians in the physician's profession, whereas they were few among the Jews, since they were inclined to deception, citing a Constantinople manuscript; and see *ibid.*, n. 24, references about the great profuseness of the physicians' profession among Jews. The *tiryāq*: Ibn Ghayyāth, *Sha'arē s.*, II, 85; Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 211; Wansharīṣī (Amar), II, 30f., where Amar cites a source from the end of the tenth century AD: Abū Muḥammad Ibn Abī Zayd, of Fās. See in Goitein, *Med Soc.*, II, 261-272, the chapter on pharmacists ('*atfār*, *sharābī*, *ṣaydalānī*); *rakḥkhām*: see: *ibn al-rakḥkhām*, in 295, a, lines 34, 45, and cf. *ibid.*, I, 423, n. 87; *ḥajjār*: 538, a, l. 7: *ibn al-ḥajjār*, cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, 422 n. 87. Ship owners: 788, a, ll. 13-14, cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, I, 133 (Who interprets *ghulām* as slave, which is not certain); *tabbār*, perhaps related to *tibr*, gold or silver ingots; *nūtī*: 581, b, l. 11, cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, I, 313; *fayj*: 265, a, l. 3, cf. *ibid.*, 285. Nissim b. Ḥalfōn: 584, a, l. 6; b, l. 5, cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, 93.

CHAPTER THREE

SLAVES

(337) Slavery was a permanent component in economy and society throughout ancient times and also in the Middle Ages. Below, I will attempt to examine the information regarding a number of aspects of this issue, i.e., what part did the Jews play in slave holding and slave traffic; how were the slaves treated, to what extent were they required to integrate into Jewish life through conversion and fulfilling religious precepts; the status of the slave women; issues of slave manumission.

In the discussion on the Rādhānites (below, secs. 341-354) we shall notice that one of the commodities they dealt in was slaves, they brought them from the Maghrib and also from the Christian areas of western Europe (Firanja). It is rather clear that the main source of slave supply was the spoils of war, essentially—and to the extent that it touches our discussion—the wars between Christians and Muslims. Aside from the Rādhānites, we hardly encounter specific cases of Jewish slave trafficking. One case may be found in an eleventh century commercial letter in the Geniza; it is the letter of Yaḥyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī, apparently from Mahdiyya, to Barhūn b. Šālīḥ al-Tāhīrtī in Fustat, at about the mid-eleventh century, where there is mention of a certain b. al-Nakhhās, the son of the slave dealer. Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl al-Makhmūrī, one of Nehorai b. Nissim's regular partners, writes him—in circa 1060—about the sale of a *jāriya*, a maidservant, which, he says, turned out to be a good sale, but that he was concerned about the fee he got for her, because the buyer was not paying his debt. In the same letter he writes about a buyer who came to him with a *turkī musālab*, apparently a Turk who was captured (by the army) somewhere in Central Asia and sold into slavery.

However, it appears that in earlier generations slave traffic was more common among the Jews (though “we did not see is no proof”, and possibly this was also the situation in the eleventh century, though there are no sources about it available). We have evidence of such towards the end of the ninth century, in a responsum of Naḥshōn gaon: “and you asked: it is common among us to buy slaves cheaply, we have no such other merchandise; are we permitted to sell them quickly, since they do not keep the Jewish faith, but one in a hundred; and in it there is much profit for us”. The gaon gives his acceptance of this traffic. The gist of the evidence here is the very information about dealing in slaves, especially concerning the issue of the conversion of slaves to Judaism, that I will be dealing with below. As we could have assumed, this commerce—so it says here—was extremely profitable. It should be remembered, that issues of religious differences were usually inserted into the legislation and the orders of the various rulers regarding the slave trade. Islam forbade non-Muslims from keeping Muslim slaves, and when Christianity progressed into becoming the state

religion in the European countries, passage through those countries became highly problematic for a someone hauling Christian slaves. The Christian legislative pattern, essentially interdicting the holding of Christian slaves was an old one, since the Theodosian laws of the first half of the fifth century. However, the fact that Byzantine emperors were constrained from time to time to renew the legislation, and add to it, proves that in reality these laws were not upheld, even the popes looked the other way when it came to traffic in Christian captives; typical is the case of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's son, who permitted slave traffic, and even attempted to prevent their baptism into Christianity so as not to harm this traffic. Only this compromising of the laws, deriving from the rulers' cupidity, facilitated the passage of slaves from the Slavic countries, for instance, to the Islamic countries.³³⁷

(338) Somewhat of an idea about the origin of slaves in the period under discussion, may be found in a slave deed of sale, in Hayy Gaon's book of formularies: "...and I sold him (for this sum) a slave, a Hindī (north India), or a Kena'anī (Slav), or a Rūmī (Greek), or a Luvā'ī (Libyan), or a Zangī (black) owned by me". It is possible that the kind of slaves most available were captives from Christian countries seized during the frequent wars, and it appears that this is how one of the responsa should be read: "...places where the Jews only find Christian maidservants to buy" (the version: Egyptians, is unlikely). It appears that holding Christian slaves was common, even among Christians themselves, as in the text of Ibn al-Ṭayyib: "if a person had a slave or a maidservant who are Christians and sought to sell them, he should only sell them to a Christian, and if he acts in any other way (than this law), he will not be allowed into the church". Slaves brought from Africa were a special kind, they would be noted according to the color of their skin; thus, for example, in a document regarding the sale of a Christian maidservant (as opposed to the aforementioned law!): 'Arūs b. Joseph, a Jewish merchant known to us from many Geniza documents, buys from a Christian, the *kātib* (official, scribe) in *dār al-dībāj* (house of silk, the silk merchants' center in Cairo), a Christian maidservant by the name Hanūn b. 'Allūn, and her son, Qawwām; she is a *kharrūbiyya* in color, i.e., the color of the carob fruit, for 21 dinars, aside from the *ju'el* (intermediary's percentage), in the first tenth of Ramaḍān 483, October-November 1090.

Below, in the discussion on the Rādhānite merchants, we shall examine the issue of slave castration. Both the Torah and the scholars forbade it, an interdiction reiterated in the geonic literature; the information in Muqaddasī, who notes that the Slav slaves (*al-ṣaqālība*) are brought to Bijāna (close to al-Mariyya in southern Spain) "whose residents are Jews, and one castrates them", is ambiguous; it may mean that they are brought to be

³³⁷ See the studies on slavery and slave trade among Jews in the Middle Ages, in Assaf, *Zion*, 4(1938/9), 91ff. (reprinted in *Oholē Ya'āqōv*, 223ff.); Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 130ff. B. al-Nakḥkhās: 628, a, l. 12, cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, 452 n. 10, who assumed that he was a Muslim; Kazimirski, in his dictionary, has an additional meaning for that term: a dealer in livestock. *Turkī musālab*: 310, a, ll. 9ff.; b, l. 13. Naḥshōn Gaon: *Shā'are s.*, 26b (no. 27). Cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 144f.; interdictions on slave trade: Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 41, 67f., 146, 235f. Ashtor, *Settimane* (1978), 454f.; Abrahams, *Jewish Life*, 69f. See also Doehaerd, *CHM* (1953/4), 583, who writes about a plethora of documents about the slave trade conducted by Jews from Lyon, Narbonne, Marseilles, Saraqusta, which went on through Spain, and see her references.

castrated there, or that the local Jews did it, and Dozy interpreted it in a one-sided way: the Jews. The geonic responsa reiterate the interdiction of the castration of slaves, yet it is permitted to buy a eunuch slave, or even order a castration by a non Jew: "you castrate them and I buy him from you, is permitted, there is nothing to it and entirely permissible".

The geonic literature also relates to deformities in slaves; Naḥshōn Gaon considered deceitful to sell a slave with a deformity when the seller conceals the information.

In the letters of the eleventh century, there is no real evidence of Jews' dealing in the slave trade, but there is evidence of their keeping slaves; their main function was domestic help, sometimes also to assist in commercial matters. We find Nathan b. Nehorai, a relative and business partner of Nehorai b. Nissim, in the 1160s, asking Nehorai if he was supposed to send the *jāriya* (the maidservant) as they had agreed, from Alexandria to Malīj (where he was staying, or where Nehorai was planning to go), and was awaiting instructions in this regard. He repeats his request for instructions in a subsequent letter, such as, what is the maximum price that Nehorai would agree to, noting that there is no certainty that one would want to make the sale. If he buys her and there are no instructions, she would remain in the house of the seller and it would be necessary to repay him her sustenance expenses. In the second half of the eleventh century, there is a copy (or draft) of a deed of gift, regarding an 'Edomite' (i.e., probably a Greek, Byzantine, woman, in all events, someone who was originally a Christian) by the name of Nujaym ("little star"), a *jāriya baytinā* (domestic servant of our house, or of our family). Bahya ("the pretty one") daughter of Joseph Ibn 'Awqal, gives her as a gift to Joseph b. Bishr b. Wahb, cousin of Bahya's deceased husband. After receiving her as a gift, Joseph b. Bishr frees her, she is permitted to marry a Jew and her sons would be permitted to study Torah. From here we also learn that her deceased husband had inherited her from his sister after she died, and it appears that the purpose of writing the deed was to prevent her going to Bahya's son; Bahya moves her instead to a cousin of her husband's, to ensure that she would be manumitted.

ʿAllān b. Yahyā writes at about 1080 from Alexandria to Mūsā b. Abī'l-Hayy in Fustat, this among other things: "I was sorry about the death of the *walid* (a slave born in the home) who was with him (with a certain Abraham al-Qalī), God will grant him a replacement for (to ease) his heart". As regards domestic help, it is clearly implied in a query to a gaon (which I have already mentioned) about "places where Jews only find Christian maidservants to buy and they are available where we live, and the gentiles, according to their law, permit the Jews to buy them, but aside from them, maidservants can only be bought secretly and in danger"; some of them refuse to convert to Judaism. "The Jews in those places have great need for them, so that they will not have to send their sons and daughters or wives to fetch well water on their shoulders and go to the bakery together with gentile and lecherous maidservants and cause the Jewish women to be mocked and in danger". In one of the responsa, the gaon rules that the women of Baghdad should not be required to mill, because "the women are not at all used to milling.... they stand and supervise their maidservants", unlike the village women who are "used to milling".

Teaching the slave Torah was forbidden, we encounter this issue in queries to the gaon; such as the case of a slave born in the home whom his master sent to study, "and he read Torah and the Prophets", even his parents had a decent status with the master; and the query: when the master dies, may the inheriting son still revert him to slavery? The gaon censures the father for teaching him, and rules that even if he learned the entire Torah he still may not be manumitted, except if he read the Torah publicly in the synagogue, even if he only read three verses. Clearly, crucial, according to the gaon, is the public act, which is apparently testimony of the master's wish to liberate him. In a 1060s anonymous letter from Alexandria to Fustat, written by one of the Fustat Maghribi merchants, there is a happy announcement about a certain Faraj the *ghulām*, the slave, "who already reads the *targūm* of the Torah", as he had promised. This is therefore a characteristic case of a slave, whose origins we do not know, who was converted and whose religious observance was fostered; he may have been a candidate for manumission, in accordance with the aforementioned halacha.³³⁸

(339) The issue of manumission upon the death of the master, is dealt with in a relatively large number of sources. The correct method was for the master to write a manumission *gēṭ* while he was still alive, but his word alone was sufficient, as decided by R. Yōhānān, and if there were witnesses, the heirs were forced to free the slave. This, of course, is reiterated in the geonic responsa. There is a case of the same kind in the house of the exilarch, Nathan b. Shahriyār (above, sec. 77), who made an oral command to free his slave and his maidservant, and Isaac Šādōq Gaon ruled that his will had to be fulfilled and that a *giṭā de-ḥērūtā* (writ of freedom) be issued. A similar procedure is found in the Syrian law books, in the ruling of Ḥananīshū^c (about AD 700) regarding the complaint of a man against his two brothers who freed a slave, a bequest of their father, because he was the husband of their wetnurse; Ḥananīshū^c rules that the local appointee confirm the manumission if it is proven that it had been the deceased's will; if not, the opponents of the manumission must be recompensed according

³³⁸ See Hayy Gaon, *Sefer ha-sheṭārōt* (Assaf), 28; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 11 (1920/21), 457. Only Christian slave women: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 224 (no. 431) and also *Sha'arē s.*, 23b (no. 6). See Ibn al-Ṭayyib, II, 62, and also I, 199: "shall be under a ban". The Christian slave woman of a carob-like color, see: Khan, *Ar. Leg. and Adm. Docs.*, 262f. (no. 56), and see on *Dār al-dibāj*: Gil, *Hist.*, 342; the Talmud's interdiction on castration: BT *Shabbāt*, 110b; *Ḥagigā*, 14b; it is based on the Pentateuch, Lev. 22:24; see R. Aḥai, the *She'iltōt*, IV, 229 (no. 122), "it is also forbidden to castrate a human being", and even to employ drugs which castrate, and further: "it is also forbidden to tell a gentile to castrate (a slave) owned by a Jew"; this contradicts some geonic responsa, cited here. Muqaddasī, *Āqālīm*, 242, and cf. Harkavy, *Hamaggid*, 21 (1876/7), 219; Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 146. The geonic responsa: *Sha'arē s.*, 23a (no. 3); *Resp.* Coronel no. 78; see the anti-Semitic comment of Dozy, *Histoire*, II, 154, about "the Jews who speculated on the misery of (other) nations"; by his description it would seem that the slave trade was entirely and exclusively in Jewish hands; see Mann, *ibid.*, 151 n. 221. Naḥshōn Gaon about defects: *Sha'arē s.* 81b (no. 17); cf. Harkavy, *Resp.*, 228 (no. 435); Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 150. Nathan b. Nehorai: 423, a, ll. 13-15; 424, a, ll. 12-14; Nujaym: 224; sympathies on the death of a slave: 777, b, ll. 5-6; the matter of the slave women: *Sha'arē s.*, 23b (no. 6); Harkavy, *Resp.*, 224f. (no. 431); the query comes from people in Tilimsān in the Maghrib. The matter of milling: Assaf, *Resp. (Madde'e ha-y.)*, 2, 22; the interdiction to teach the Torah: BT *Ketubbōt*, 28a; the slave who learned Torah: *Sha'arē s.*, 26b-27a (no. 29), and similarly Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 83; Faraj who knows the *targūm*: 794, a, margin.

to their proportionate share in the slave. Also ascribed to this bishop, Hananīshū^c, is an order to ban Marī b. Narsī—*qeshishā* (the priest), if he does not fulfill his deceased father's wish to free the slave Yōhānān, who held the father's writ of manumission. The bishop, Yishū^cbarnūm (820-824) ordered the banning and expulsion from the church, of anyone who relented over the freeing of his slave or his maidservant, or of his sons who would not fulfill the manumission after his death.

We have a deathbed will of Sitt al-Husn, wife of the *dayyān* Nathan b. Samuel, 'the diadem', of the mid-twelfth century; in this will she frees her two virgin maidservants, Dhahab ('gold') and Sitt al-Sumr ("lady of brownness"—apparently of Nubian origin), and wills them a fourth of the house she had owned in partnership with Abū'l-Munajjā Solomon b. Šedaqa, granting them the rest of their lives the right to live in the half of the house where she had lived, and after their death the Fustat *heqdēsh* (pious foundation) would receive the half of this house; she gives it to them "if they remain Jewish".

One may also find evidence of the fulfillment of the regulations regarding slaves that distinguished the halacha from the views of the general population in ancient times, to wit, the obligation of freeing a slave who escaped from prison, which is mentioned in a responsum of Palṭoi Gaon.

Regarding the freeing of slaves, one should also note the halacha about "someone who was half slave and half free; you coerce his master to make him a free person and write a deed for half his worth". If we make the attempt to picture the situation, we will conclude that in cases of manumission that are not connected to the death of the master, or other special circumstances, the manumitted slave was bound by monetary conditions. As to the meaning of "a half slave"—it appears that one of the parents was a free person. The master was indeed required to free him, but the slave was also required by a deed to recompense the master for half his worth, apparently, by order of the *bēt dīn*.

It appears that the *bēt dīn* often convened to arrange the issues involved in negotiations regarding slaves; thus, for example, we find in a letter of Hayyim ha-Kohen b. ʿAlī b. Hayyim, the Fustat community leader, writing from Alexandria to his father in Fustat, the matter of the sale of a maidservant. The sale did not take place, because the buyer demanded that he receive her with everything that she had (or that was coming to her?) from Hayyim (the writer), thus for the time being she is held as a surety by the *bēt dīn* and is about to be sold.³³⁹

³³⁹ Setting slaves free upon the master's death: PT *Giṭṭin*, i. 43d; "it was taught (if a man said:) this (writ of) emancipation shall be for my slave, and died (without completing it); Rabbi (Judah ha-nāsī) said (the slave) does not win (his freedom); (but) the sages said: he does. As to the heirs, one has to compel them to fulfill what the deceased has said"; see also BT *Giṭṭin*, 40a, which has an addition: "Whoever said, before his death, I was pleased with my slave woman (named) so-and-so, therefore she has to be pleased, his heir shall be compelled" etc. The same in the Tosefta *Bāvā batrā*, 9:14. In *Sha'arē s.*, 26b, no. 25, it is ascribed to Ḥanīna Gaon; see *ibid.*, 27a (no. 31), a discussion on whether it is permitted for a man, before his death, to promise a slave woman that she will be emancipated after his wife's death. Nathan b. Shahriyār: Bodl MS Heb c 18, f. 38r; Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 83. Hananīshū^c: Sachau, *Syr. Rechtsb.*, 14 (no. VII), and *ibid.*, 183, it is found in agreement with Muslim laws; the slave Yōhānān: *ibid.*, 13 (no. V). Yishū^cbarnūm: *ibid.*, 147 (no. LXVI); cf. Aptowitz, *Akad. Vienna*, 163 (5; 1909). Assaf, *Zion*, 4 (1939), 102f.; Mann, *JQR*, NS 10

(340) Keeping a maidservant for carnal purposes was an accepted daily occurrence in Muslim society, and it appears that Jews, too, were drawn to the same experiences. The halachic views as expressed by the geonim—apparently after there were such cases—was, of course, strict: “a Jew caught having a maidservant for whoring purposes.... she is taken away from him, she is sold, and the money paid is distributed to the Jewish needy, he is whipped, his hair shaved off, and he is banned for thirty days”. Pertinent here is also a geonic responsum—in various versions—regarding Bustanai, which set a precedent, because giving birth to children was seen as evidence that he had freed the maidservant according to Jewish law and had married her, without any burden of proof on the children, for it is a priori known that a Jew “does not have intercourse for whoring” (above, sec. 47; there we saw the reservations of the geonim regarding this halachic interpretation).

The halacha required the conversion of slaves; however, it was not a complete process of acceptance into the Jewish community and society, and the slave, or maidservant, remained, of course, in their special inferior status, one of freedmen. From the halachic standpoint there was opposition to forced conversion, as stated in the responsum of Sherira Gaon “....forced immersion (in the ritual bath for conversion) is not valid”. In order to determine whether the maidservant had been properly immersed, even though she still maintained gentile customs, it is not enough to suffice with her testimony and she may be sold to a gentile, except if there were witnesses that she was indeed immersed (responsum of Isaac Şemaḥ Gaon). As to the ban on selling the slave to a gentile, if he had been converted to Judaism, the issue was, apparently, quite flexible; Naṭrūnai Gaon permitted the sale of a converted slave to a gentile, if the slave was an evildoer, suspected of theft, or of not maintaining the *mišwōt*. A kind of general permission to sell unconverted slaves, when reasons of security were involved, is in the following responsum: “in places where they are afraid of the unconverted slaves so that they might reveal the secrets of the Jews to those who seek to destroy them and bring about dangers and wars, one should certainly not keep them” (the slaves).

A geonic responsum deals with the blessings to be recited during the circumcision of a slave; the performer of the circumcision recites the blessing “to Him who has sanctified us with his commandments and ordered us to perform the circumcision”, while the slave’s owner recites: “to circumcise the slaves”. The matter of circumcision seemed to be more important than all the other conditions of slave holding, as stated in a geonic responsum dealing with keeping the Sabbath: “this is not depending on us; we can

(1919/20), 149f.; Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 144. The will of Sitt al-Ḥusn was printed by Goitein, *Sefunot*, 8 (1963/4), 111ff., and Gil, *Docs.*, 270ff. (no. 55, which is TS 13 J 22, f. 2). A slave who fled from the prison: “he shall be set free, and his owner will even be constrained to write a writ of emancipation for him” (BT *Giṭṭin* 38a, see Deut. 23:16), see it in *Shāf’rē* s., 25a (No. 14). As against it, the *ḥadīth* transmitted in the name of Ibn ‘Umar: “...whoever wears silken clothes and drinks from silver vessels does not belong to us; also whoever incites a wife against her husband or a slave against his master, does not belong to us”, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādī, *Ta’rīkh*, XI, 55 (the entry of ‘Abd al-Salām b. Sahl, who is Abū ‘Alī al-Sukkarī). Half a slave: see the Mishnā, *Giṭṭin*, 4:4-5; and in the BT, *Giṭṭin*, 41af.; *Oṣar ha-g.* to *Giṭṭin*, 85. See Epstein, *JQR*, NS 4 (1913/4), 426, from a Vienna manuscript of *Halākhōt pesūqōt*. Ḥayyim ha-Kohen’s letter: 792, b, ll. 3-7.

only give them repose and rest and inform them of the greatness of the Sabbath; if they keep it, well and good, if they do not, we are absolved of responsibility"; the gaon explains that the matter of circumcising the slave is weightier than the keeping of the Sabbath, and that the latter depended on the slave's will. There is also the problem of the oath, or the vow which might be taken by the slave, that he would no longer serve his master; Naḥshōn Gaon does not accept this, according to the biblical "they shall be your bondmen for ever" (Lev. 25:46), in this situation, too, the slave may not be sold to a gentile. It is obvious that selling a slave to a gentile was not only forbidden from the halachic standpoint, we have even seen this interdiction repeated regarding a number of possibilities; it is implied that such a sale was also considered harsh punishment; from the halachic standpoint removing a person from the Jewish realm was considered a harsh blow to the person removed; it is not far-fetched to assume that the slaves themselves preferred being with the Jews.

However, even with Jews, slavery was not particularly pleasant, to put it mildly. Obviously, the slave was lowest of the low from the social standpoint. To say of someone that he was a child of slaves, even that his distant origins were from slaves, was a hard blow; we have a memorandum in the handwriting of Ephraim b. Shemariah, the leader of the 'Palestinians' in Fustat, of 1 Kislev, Sel. 1355, 26 November 1043, regarding Ḍabyān ha-Kohen b. Saadia, who had slandered Abū'l-Faḍl Joseph b. Perahiah, and his father Perahiah, saying that they were descendants of slaves; he was forced to admit that it was a lie. We have the responsum of Palṭoi Gaon to the query of Eleazar *alūf* of Aspāmiya (Christian Spain), regarding the son of a maidservant fathered by her master before she was converted to Judaism, whereas the widow had no children; the brother of the deceased took the widow in levirate marriage and claimed that that son was a slave; the gaon responded, in coordination with the contemporary Sura gaon, Naṭrūnai, that that son had the status of a manumitted slave, even though there was a difference of opinion between the geonim on this issue (above, sec. 47, regarding Bustanai); that son could not be a reason to release the women from the levirate marriage obligation. Contrary to this ruling, Hayy Gaon ruled (a ruling of principle, of course) that that maidservant's son did provide release from the levirate marriage obligation.

Manumitted slaves, according to the tradition and custom that we usually find in the cultures of the ancient world and in the Middle Ages, remained connected to the family that had owned them. Characteristic here is what we read regarding Faraj, a freed slave, in the letter of the sons of Berekhiah, of Qayrawān, to Ibn ʿAwqal, in Fustat, where they ask him to help Faraj; at issue is the inheritance coming to him from a daughter of the family, perhaps his sister; Faraj, himself, was traveling to Fustat and taking along the letters of the sons of Berekhiah; he is the sole heir, they write, and they deny a rumor spread by someone in Fustat, that the woman had another heir in Qayrawān. They emphasize that assisting Faraj is in the realm of a *miṣwā*. We find a Faraj (it is not clear if he is identical with the previous one), who was "*mawlā* Barhūn", i.e., Barhūn the Tāhirtī's freed slave, writing himself to Ibn ʿAwqal in fine Hebrew script. This Faraj had much money and dealt in pearl and camphor commerce.

From geonic responsa and also from letters in the Geniza, we can see that slaves, if they were gifted, were made partners, as were also manumitted slaves, in commercial enterprises. There is an interesting case in the letter of Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, of 12 August 1062, from Alexandria, to Nehorai b. Nissim; a slave—apparently of Nehorai's—by the name of Ṭayyib, who had to assist the writer, and for this purpose was sent to him, was in charge of a shipment of goods to Būṣīr, and in the midst of the work he turned to other matters. Isaiah asks Nehorai to reprimand him and make sure that he returns to the *rīf*, the Delta area, to Fuwa or to Maṭīj.

Attention should also be paid to something that appears obvious, but should nevertheless be noted, that there is no real evidence in the sources about Jewish slaves; there is much about the redemption of Jewish captives, but there is no factual evidence at all about Jewish slaves of non-Jews, certainly not of Jews. Contrary to what some students of the pre-Islamic period, i.e., the talmudic period, write, it seems to me that the same situation held for what had also existed earlier; because also for the talmudic period there is no real information, explicitly stating any names of slave and master, regarding Jewish slaves.³⁴⁰

³⁴⁰ Whoever is caught with a slave woman: *Shā'arē s.*, 25a (no. 13), and see *ibid.*, 27b-28a (no. 38). See also the responsum of Abraham Maimonides about a man who has a slave woman as his concubine, in Assaf, *Meqōrōt*, 167. A Hebrew writ (not from the Geniza) where a slave woman is mentioned as a gift, was edited by Marçais et Poinssot, *Notes et documents*, 11 (1948/52), I, 209. See 'Amram Gaon: *Shā'arē s.*, 25b (no. 18), and see BT *Yevāmōt* 48b. Kohan Šedeq Gaon: *Shā'arē s.*, 26a (no. 19), and see BT *Giṭṭin* 44a; a fine will be imposed, to pay "for the ransom of captives or for shrouds for an unclaimed corpse (*mēt mišwā*) or for scholars". See also : *Shā'arē s.* 26b (no. 27); according to Nahshōn Gaon it is forbidden to sell slaves who accepted the *mišwōt* (commandments) to a gentile, but if they did not, it is permitted. Similarly, there is such a responsum by Hayy Gaon, *ibid.*, 23a (no. 1); by Sherira and Hayy: *Shā'arē tesh.*, no. 454. Rules of immersion: *Ōsar ha-g.* to *Yevāmōt*, 276 (from the Rome manuscript of *Halākhōt qešūvōt*). Slaves who refused to be circumcised: Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 197. Interdiction to compel: *Shā'arē s.*, 25b (no. 16); witnesses that a slave woman was immersed: *Shā'arē s.* 27a (no. 30); Ginzberg, *ibid.*, 183; Natrūnai Gaon: *Shā'arē s.*, 27b (no. 37), and see also the responsum of Hayy Gaon, *ibid.*, 23b (no. 3): a slave who was circumcised and immersed is allowed to handle food and wine; but if he does not fulfill the commandments it is permitted to sell him to a gentile. See *ibid.*, also 26a (no. 20). Sale where there is a danger: Harkavy, *Resp.*, no. 431. The blessings: Yehudai Gaon, *Resp. Lyck*, 18a (no. 45). Importance of the circumcision: *Ge'ōnē mizr. ū-m.*, no. 49. Nahshōn Gaon: *Shā'arē s.*, 27b (no. 33). Dabyān ha-Kohen: Bodl MS Heb c 28, f.41v (who is Zibyan—which is the correct spelling—b. Sa'āda, mentioned in 143, 230, and also in TS 13 J 1 f. 10, a deed of 26 March 1044; one of the Babylonians in Fustat); Abū'l-Faḍl Joseph b. Perahiah (Farah) was a merchant staying in Alexandria, mentioned many times in my Geniza collection, see in the index in vol. IV of my *Be-malkhūt*; it seems that there was a grain of truth in what the 'detractor' said. The matter of *Yibbūm*: *Shā'arē s.*, 25a (no. 15); 2b (no. 17). Theoretically, the status of a slave in matters of trust and oaths was like that of a woman, i.e., a slave was not to be trusted in oaths, although he was bound to fulfill the commandments; this is the way that Hayy Gaon decided: *Shā'arē s.*, 73b-74a (no. 10). The inheritance of Faraj: 150; the letter of Faraj: 166; in the first Joseph b. Berekhiah calls him: *'ātiq 'ammī*, the freedman of my uncle; Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 37 (1967/8), 165, interpreted this as: the freedman of my father-in-law. Responsibilities laid upon a slave: *Shā'arē s.*, 26b (no. 29); 73b (no. 10); *Resp. Coronel* no. 79; cf. Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 149. The matter of Ṭayyib: 312, a, ll. 28ff.; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 96f. See on the subject of Jewish slaves: Neusner, *Hist.*, IV, 246f.; Urbach, *Zion*, 25 (1960), 141ff.; Baron, *SRHJ*, II, 258f.; Goodblatt, *JESHO*, 22 (1979), 280. Quite strange is the statement of Baron, *ibid.*, that in general there were no Jewish slaves; however, there certainly were some Jewish slaves (where did he know this from?); sometimes children were sold into slavery in order to pay taxes; see *ibid.*, 416 n. 35, where there are no references to what he stated.

CHAPTER FOUR

JEWISH MERCHANTS AND FINANCIERS

1. *The Rādhānites*

(341) The Jewish masses earned their livelihood through agriculture, crafts, and local small commerce; however, there were also groups of great merchants, financiers with a tradition of variegated and ramified commerce, who dealt in international trade or trade between countries. These groups had been in existence for generations, from before the Islamic period. The capital and wealth that they had amassed was preserved through the generations in the families of these merchants, just as the tradition and economic savoir faire, the ties and the knowability, were certainly also passed on from father to son. Such groups of merchants had apparently existed in the two ancient pre-Islamic empires—in Byzantium and Sasanid Persia. It appears that the Persian empire's international trade was in Jewish hands. We find echoes of such in the talmudic sources, especially as regards silk.

The trade in silk, which used to be brought into the Christian areas under Byzantine control from India, served as one of the most important controversial political flashpoints for many generations prior to Islam. According to Iohannes Malalas, it was the pretext for the Ḥimyar war (circa 520-525; the area of today's Yemen), where Joseph As'ar (in Malalas' language: Dimnos, the Dhū Nuwās of the Arabic sources), the Jewish king of Ḥimyar, robbed and killed Byzantine traders who passed through his country on their way back from India. Procopius of Caesarea knows about an agreement between Byzantium and Ḥimyar initiated by Emperor Justinian; the emperor sent a special envoy to Shumayfa^c (Malalas: Esimiphaioi) ruler of Ḥimyar after the killing of the Jewish king, proposing cooperation in buying silk in India and marketing it in the areas of the empire, so as to totally eliminate the Persian merchants (who were Jews, as it should be assumed) from this trade. In so doing the emperor proposed organizing an invasion by Arab tribes from the Arabian Peninsula into the Persian empire. Even though the sides had signed the agreement, it had no real results. The military part did not materialize, and competing with the 'Persian' merchants was an impossible task because they were in closer proximity to India and constantly present in its ports of exit. Although centers of clothing processing and manufacture were also in the Byzantine Empire—especially in Beirut and Tyre, the raw silk was imported from Persia. When the price of silk rose too high, Justinian ordered that it be lowered, but the merchants claimed that it was the Persians who had caused the price rise, as did the taxes levied by the emperor himself. Because of the measures ordered by the emperor, many merchants were then forced to flee to the areas of

Persia. Usually, Byzantine merchants would purchase the silk in the domains of the Persian Empire and sell it to local workshops and merchants. A high Byzantine official (*logothetes*) was staying in Qulzum, where the ships set sail to bring perfumes, spices, pearls and ornamental stones. The overseer of this trade was the *comes*, who was in charge of all commercial matters concerning trade with the Orient and Egypt. The peace treaty between Justinian and Khusraw, signed in 562, included paragraphs about regular roads and tax stations based on mutual trade relations between the two states. We learn in a roundabout way about a commercial center in the Persian area, rich in locally manufactured goods and goods in transit, from what the Byzantine chronicles have to say about Dastagird (which is Daskarat al-Malik, on the Dīyāla canal in the area of Rādhān), which Heraclius conquered from the Persians in 625: aside from aloe wood, sugar, pepper, ginger and silver ingots, there was silk, fur coats and silk clothes. In that period, "a goodly Babylonish garment" (Joshua 7:21) was less understood by the Jewish reader (or auditor) than the midrashic *porphirā bavliqōn*, a red-hued (as it should be understood, not blue) garment brought from Babylonia. We may assume that in most, if not all, cases, the merchants, those who dealt in those goods, were Jews.

Great changes, of course, were generated by the Muslim conquest in the conditions of the trade system that linked the Orient, which was under Persian rule, and the Byzantine ruled countries of the Mediterranean Basin and Europe. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that the division between the two worlds was not an Arab innovation, but now, instead of Persia and Byzantium, we have a Muslim world and Byzantium. The shrinking of the area of Byzantium and the end of its absolute control in the Mediterranean Sea, is what constituted the great change. Ibn Khaldūn expressed this in a few simple words: "the Muslims conquered this entire sea on all sides, they took control of it all". However, this is not exact, the Muslims did not have complete control of Asia Minor, also, the littorals of Italy and France remained outside their control.

A ramified debate beginning with the publication of *Mahomet et Charlemagne*, by the Belgian scholar H. Pirenne (in 1937, published posthumously), developed among scholars regarding the nature of the change that took place in the ties between the two powers around the Mediterranean Sea and Southwest Asia, in the field of trade. After describing the processes undergone by Western Europe since the beginning of the disintegration of the Roman Empire and the invasion of 'Barbarian' people, Pirenne portrayed as catastrophic the results of the Muslim conquest on most of the Mediterranean Basin, a total collapse of the international economic ties of that period. According to him, the main expressions in Europe of this collapse, of the cutoff of ties between East and West, were: (a) cessation of the use of gold coins, in all events, the end of the minting of gold coins in the Frankish kingdom; (b) cessation of textile imports from the East; (c) the end of the use of papyrus, from the time of the last Merovingian kings; (d) cessation of perfume and spice imports. These are the main points of what is customarily called "the Pirenne thesis". Some students contested the thesis. In an article he published in 1943, Lopez presented a plethora of counter evidence in the coin field, the use of papyrus, and trade in textiles. In 1948, Lombard added evidence in regards to coin minting, and proved

that the minting of gold coins was the result of a fear of Byzantine pressure, because the emperor sought exclusive minting privileges; actually, at that time a process of Muslim dinar penetration began. As to the decline in textile imports, it was the result of economic distress in Western Europe, especially of a scarcity of gold. Concerning papyrus—it declined because of the use of paper. The use of perfumes and spices declined in Europe because those commodities became significantly dearer after the Muslim world developed and began consuming them in large quantities, while Western Europe was poor in means of payment; this poverty had many other causes, not necessarily resulting from the Islamic conquests, and had existed even before them; on the contrary, Islam augmented and developed the economy of Europe by creating a continuous link between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea; it did so by opening new trade routes between Eastern and Western Europe; by motivating Byzantium into strengthening its ties with Western Europe and the Black Sea; by facilitating and maintaining broad international trade.³⁴¹

(342) There is no doubt that the thesis proposed by Pirenne and the debate that subsequently developed, made a significant contribution to a clarification of the issue of the state of international trade and its advance (or decline) after the Muslim conquests. One oft-heard argument against the thesis was the famous passage from the book by Ibn Khurdādhbih, written about the mid-ninth century, describing the routes of the Jewish Rādhānite merchants and the goods they distributed. In the mid 1840s, Sprenger first informed the world of research of the fragment, using the Bodleian manuscript no. 993, but he still was not able to properly read the name al-Rādhāniyya, reading it instead: al-Rāniyya. Four years later, in 1848, Reinaud included the translation of the fragment of Ibn Khurdādhbih in the geography of Abū'l-Fidā' that he edited. Seventeen years later, Barbier de Meynard published the book of Ibn Khurdādhbih, serialized, in the *JA*, inclusive, of course, of the relevant fragment; the book by Ibn Khurdādhbih was published in its entirety in De Goeje's edition, in 1879. Since then the fragment has been translated into various languages and widely discussed. Here is the translation of the fragment:

³⁴¹ Iohannes Malalas, *Chronographia*, in MPG, 97, 639f.; Procopius, *Anecdota* xxv, 13-26; *idem*, *Hyper tōn polemōn*, I. xx. On the role of the Jews in textile production and their trade in antiquity, especially in Palestine, see Alon, *Hist.*, I, 88-93. See also Beer, *Amōra'ē b.*, 180ff.; on the state organization of commerce, see Millet, *Mél. Schlumberger*, 304. See the details of the treaty of Justinian and Khusraw: Menander, 346ff.; cf. Bury, *Hist.*, I, 467ff.; Dastagird: see Theophanes, 322; Cedrenus, I, 732; *pōrfirā bavliqōn*, *Gen. Rabbā*, 85 (Theodor and Albeck, 1050); *Tanḥūma, mishpāṭim*, x. no. 72 (Buber, 87); Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddima* (Beirut), II, 798f.; cf. Kreutz, *Viator*, 7 (1976), 91. See a list of critical reviews of Pirenne's book in: Dennett, *Speculum*, 23 (1948), 165; see also Lopez, *Speculum*, 18:14, 1943; Lombard, *AESC*, 3:188, 1948. See also the article by Doehaerd, *CHM*, 1(1954), 578ff., who challenges Pirenne's view on the disjunction, and notes that the Muslims did not hinder the conquered populations from exporting their goods. The production of papyrus in Egypt was not halted, nor was the exportation of various kinds of fabrics to Constantinople, until the end of the seventh century AD; she also enumerates Merovingian documents which contain evidence of trade in spices, papyrus, oil; foreign merchants visiting Alexandria are mentioned by Arculf, see in Tobler et Molinier, 188. Attention should also be paid to the survey of hoards of Abbasid coins, discovered not only in the Near East, but also in the Caucasus, in European Russia and in the Baltic region, minted between 766/7 and 850; see Noonan, *JESHO*, 29:113, 1986.

The Route of the Jewish Rādhānite Merchants,

who speak Arabic and Persian and Rūmī (=Greek), and Ifranjī (=probably: Latin, *infra* sec. 349) and Andalusī (=Spanish) and Slavic. They travel from east to west and from the west to the east, by land and by sea. They market slaves from the west and maidservants and boys, and silk cloth, and rabbit hides (*khazz*) and sable furs (*sammūr*) and swords. They sail from Firanja in the western sea and leave from Faramā and transport their goods on the backs (of beasts of burden) to Qulzum, whereas there is between (these two places a distance of) 25 parasangs (about 150 kilometers); then they sail in the eastern sea, from Qulzum to al-Jār and to Judda, then pass on to Sind and to Hind and to China. They transport from China aloe wood, cinnamon and more (goods that they regularly) transport from those areas; they then return to Qulzum and then transport them to Faramā, then they set sail in the western sea; sometimes they turn to Constantinople with their merchandise and sell it to the Byzantines; sometimes they travel with it to the king of Firanja and sell it there; and if they wish they transport their goods from Firanja, in the western sea, and they go from Antioch and travel by land three *marḥalas* (*marḥala*, a distance of a day, considered eight parasangs, about 50 kilometers) to Jābiya, and from there they sail the Euphrates to Baghdad, and from there they sail the Tigris to Ubulla, and from Ubulla to ‘Ummān and to Sind and to Hind and to China. All this is done consecutively, one after the other. Those of them who go from Andalus or Firanja cross (the sea) to Sūs al-Aqṣā and arrive at Ṭanja and from there to Ifrīqiya and from there to Egypt (or: Fustat) and from there to Ramla and from there to Damascus and from there to Kūfa and from there to Baghdad and from there to Baṣra and from there to al-Ahwāz and from there to Fāris and from there to Kirmān and from there to Sind and from there to Hind and from there to China. Some of them turn to beyond Byzantium (*rūmiya*) to the land of the Slavs (*al-ṣaqāliba*) and from there to Khamlīj the city of the Khazars and from there in the sea of Jurjān (=Caspian) and from there to Balkh and to what is beyond the river (=Transoxania) and from there to Wurut Tughuz Ghuzz and from there to China.

According to Ibn Khurdādhbih, who wrote his book at about the mid ninth century AD, and adding what is in Ibn al-Faqīh, the Jewish Rādhānite merchants were, to put it short, active on a number of commercial paths extending from the land of ‘Firanja’ and the land of ‘Andalus’, i.e., Western Europe and from the Atlantic Ocean to China in the Far East. The ramifications of these paths reached the center of the Abbasid caliphate, even its periphery, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, the northern regions of India (Sind and Hind) and Khurāsān. The Rādhānites also reached Constantinople, Antioch, the *ṣaqāliba* countries, and beyond Byzantium (*al-rūm*), the areas of the Khazars, around the Caspian Sea, and Transoxania in Central Asia. These merchants knew six languages: Arabic, Persian, Greek (*rūmiyya*) Ifranjiyya, Andalusiiyya, and the language of the *Ṣaqāliba*. Ibn Khurdādhbih also lists the goods they transported from the West to the East: slaves—men, women and children; silk fabrics; furs and swords. From China they brought musk, aloe wood (*‘ūd*), camphor and cinnamon.

There were differences of opinion among the students regarding the different details of this source; yet regarding their country of origin there was generally agreement among them, and they believed that they were from Western Europe. Barbier de Meynard, one of the first researchers,

ascribed the Rādhānites to what he called 'the three cantons of Radān(!), which he located on the eastern side of the *sawād*, pointing out that this is how Ibn Khurdādhbih himself described them, in another section of his book. Indeed, in the table of the districts he compiled, their income and their taxes, Ibn Khurdādhbih mentions only one Rādhān region, on the eastern side of the Tigris; it seems, therefore, that Barbier de Meynard drew his information about the three Rādhān districts from one of the other sources that I will be mentioning. Ghunayma, as well, who, in 1924, published a book about the history of the Jews in Iraq, noted that "perhaps he (Ibn Khurdādhbih) sought to ascribe them (the Rādhānites) to Rādhān, which was a district (*kūra*) in the *sawād* of Iraq".³⁴²

(343) The first of the students who proffered the Western European origin of the Rādhānites was Heyd, in the first (1879), German, version of his book on the history of commerce in the Near East. True, he notes, in order to embark on such great expeditions in those days a geographical orientation of the kind necessary was only to be found in the Islamic world, first and foremost in its center, Baghdad. However, the existence of a chain of Jewish communities extending from Spain to China facilitated the ability of the western Jewish merchants to operate in such a manner. The conditions prevailing in the Carolingian kingdom were especially congenial to such embarkations. In fact, Christian sources have been preserved that testify to the existence of Jewish communities in Italy and Southern France for generations, from the end of the ancient world until the time of Charlemagne and later; such as the story of a Ravenna Jew who tried to deliver the city to the Goths during the time of Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths (beginning of the sixth century); the Neapolitan Jews are said to have supported the Goths against Belisarius, in about 534; there is information about the Jews of Southern France and Italy towards the end of the sixth century and the beginning of the seventh; Charlemagne teaching the greedy bishop a lesson with the help of a Jewish merchant, one of the traveling merchants, who sold the bishop a mouse for a huge sum of money; again, about the time of Charlemagne, there is a story about the people of a port city in Southern France, who, when they saw a Norman pirate ship assumed they were merchants, "Jews, or Africans or Britons". At the beginning of the ninth century we find information about Southern France Jews in the letters of Agobard, the archbishop of Lyon, warning against associating with them; also, see the licence given to the Jews of Lyon by Louis the Pious, which included the right to buy and sell slaves and hire out Christians for labor.

³⁴² See the fragment on the Rādhānites, in Ibn Khurdādhbih, 153f., and see Sprenger, *Journal of the Oriental Society of Bengal*, 13(1844), 521f.; Reinaud, *Géogr.*, I, 58ff.; Barbier de Meynard, *JA*, VI-5 (1865), 115ff.; see English versions: Jacobs, *Jewish Contrib.*, 194ff.; Adler, *Jew. Trav.*, 2; Lopez and Raymond, *Med. Tr.*, 31f.; Katz, *The Jews*, 134; Rabinowitz, *JQR*, NS 35 (1944/5), 252f.; Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, 106; Serjeant, *Ars. Isl.*, 15-16 (1968), 85; French (besides De Goeje, Barbier de Meynard, Reinaud), Blachère, *Extraits*, 27ff.; Hadj-Sadok, *Descr.*, 211f.; German: Aronius, *Regesten*, no. 113; see a Hebrew version: Dinur, *Isr ba-g.*, I (1), 366f. See praise of Ibn Khurdādhbih in the book of the fifteenth century bibliographer al-Sakhāwī, *ʿIlān*, 155f., who notes that many authors who succeeded him copied and imitated him. The district of the *Rādhānayn* (the two Rādhāns): Ibn Khurdādhbih, 12; see Barbier de Meynard, *JA*, VI-5 (1865), 34, 240, 512f.; Ghunayma, 133 n. 2.

The same year, 1879, in which Heyd published his book, De Goeje published his *Glossarium* for the first three volumes of Arabic geographers that he had published. Relying on the version of Ibn al-Faqīh (see below) and on the spelling found there, *rāhdāniyya*, he claimed that this word also meant: a textile merchant (*bazzāz*), which seemed to him a Persian loan word, derived from *rāh* + *dān*, as noted by Dozy in his great dictionary. Actually, the word *rahdān*, or *rahdār*, especially in its plural form: *rahādīra*, in some sources, means a textile merchant. This view, that the term *rahdāniyya* had a Persian etymology was already stated by Reinaud, in 1848, and he interpreted it as: *connaisseurs de chemin*; it may be that Dozy reached a similar conclusion independently. This was also accepted by Marquart, in 1903.³⁴³

(344) In 1907, Schipper relied on the fragment of Ibn Khurdādhbih's to base his conclusion that no doubt should be cast on the fact that the Western European Jewish merchants could reach each corner of the world, as it was then known. In an article he published five years later, he added an explanation saying that the Jews of the east in that period were mainly farmers and artisans. The few who dealt in commerce limited themselves to different areas of the caliphate; thus it is impossible to assume that merchants who traded with the countries of Western Europe were from the east.

Julius Guttman, as well in 1907, published an article dealing with the economic status of the Jews in the Middle Ages, where he relied, of course, on Ibn Khurdādhbih in order to emphasize the importance of the function that the Western European Jews filled, not only as regards the link between the two parts of the world, i.e., the Islamic countries and the Christian countries, but even in the internal economic life of the Muslim world. Another article on this matter was published in the same year, 1907, by Simonsen. He opposed the view of Barbier de Meynard, that the origin of those Jewish merchants was the district of Rādhān, because—he argued—the place from which they set out, as Ibn Khurdādhbih describes, was France. Thus he suggested that they be seen as the heirs and successors of the merchants who would set sail in ancient times on the Rhône River which—so it should be assumed—were called in Latin the *nautae Rhodanici*, from where, he believed, the name *Rahdāniyya* is derived, regardless of the various spellings in the manuscripts. De Goeje came out against this suggestion in 1908; he noted that the phonetic transliteration o

³⁴³ See Heyd, I, 137-142; Ravenna: *Acta Sanctorum*, Aug., 6.69; Napoli: Procopii Caes. *De bello Gothico*, I, viii, 41; southern France, end of the sixth century: Gregorii Turonensis *Hist.*, MGH (SS Merov.), I, 205f., 286f.; beginning of the seventh century: Gregorii Magni *Epist.*, MPL, 77, 510, 877, 970f.; the time of Charlemagne: Monachi Sangallensis *Gesta Karoli.*, MGH, SSII, 737-757, and see also Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 37-48. See the letter of Agobard: MPL, 104, 105, 107f., 112; the authorization for the Jews of Lyon: [De] Rozière, *Recueil*, I, 417ff. (no. 28); see *ibid.* also pp. 43f. (no. 29), the authorization for the Jew Abraham; see on the importance of the role played by Jews in the trade of western Europe: Höniger, *Zeitschr. f. d. Gesch. d. Juden in D.*, 1:65, 1887. See De Goeje, *BGA* IV, 251, and Dozy, *Suppl.*, I, 562b; also Muqaddasī, *Āqālīm*, 30, 225 (*bāb al-rahādina* in Qayrawān). See on *rahādina* (or: *rahādīra*) in terms like *sūq al-rahādina*: Fagnon, *Chronique*, 188, n.3; Brunschvig, *Berbérie*, I, 364; II, 204 (who translates: *marchands d'étoffe*); see also Roy and Poinssot, *Inscr. ar.* no. 159 (p. 279f.), line 8, the grave of 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Sa'd al-Rahdār; see also *ibid.*, 280 n. 3, 281. Hirschberg, *Horeb*, 14-15 (1959/60), 106. See Reinaud, *Géogr.*, 58 n. 1; Marquart, *Streifzüge*, 24, 350, assumed that the basis of the *rahādina* was in Spain.

> a (Rhodanus > Radhan) is unlikely, thus defending his view regarding the Persian origin of the name. Nevertheless, he agreed that these were westerners, from Southern France and Spain. The conjecture regarding the western origin was also accepted by Aronius, relying on Heyd (above).

In the period before World War II, there were two students who attempted to return the Rādhānites to the east, i.e., to al-Rayy (ancient Rhages) in Persia, which was an important commercial center in the early Middle Ages. In fact, Ibn al-Faḡīh presents his version of the Rādhānites (see below) in the framework of a description of the city of Rayy. This was the view of Jacobs (1919); followed by Katz (1937), who nonetheless had some reservations, noting that the chain of Jewish settlements from Spain to China could even have facilitated the embarkation of Western European Jews towards such commercial ventures. The etymology Rayy—Rādhāniyya itself is impossible, for a person who originated in Rayy was called in Arabic: al-Rāzī. Also to be noted is Starr (1939), who also believed that “they were probably eastern people”, but did not give any reasons.³⁴⁴

(345) Fischel, in studies published in 1937 and 1945, saw the Rādhānites as “Jewish merchants from the west”. In his first study, dealing with the Jewish financiers of Baghdad in the tenth century, he noted that we do not have sufficient sources to determine whether there were ties between the ancestors, or the predecessors of those financiers, and these western merchants, the Rādhānites.

In 1944, the scholarly discussion of this issue was renewed, when L. Rabinowitz published an article arguing that the statements of Ibn Khurdādhbih about the Rādhānites should be considered true and proper, because they describe one of the branches in a system of international economic relations in the early Middle Ages, and present us with a precise picture of the activities of Jews in this area and their role and status in economic life. He supported the Persian etymology of their name, believing that they were actually a kind of an organization of merchants of different origins. This variegation is the key for understanding their polyglot nature and the far-reaching ramifications of their trade routes. In his book, published three years later, Rabinowitz included a comprehensive discussion of the various details in Ibn Khurdādhbih, with a cross referencing of Christian and Jewish sources. To his mind, it is indeed plausible that these Jewish merchants embarked on such protracted journeys and were capable of carrying them out without interference and prohibitions, travelling to and

³⁴⁴ See Schipper, *Anfänge*, 18; *idem*, in *Heimkehr* (ed. Kellner), 141. Guttman, *MGWJ*, 51 (1907), 264 n.1; Simonsen, *REJ*, 54 (1907), 141. Simonsen was followed by Eppenstein as well, in his notes to the fourth edition of Grätz, *Gesch.*, V, 556: *die wohl jedenfalls vom frankischen Reich stammenden jüdischen Handelsleute*; and also by Mann, *JQR*, NS 10 (1919/20), 327f., who writes about “Jewish merchants from the south of France”; equally, Dinur, *Isr. ba-g.*, I(1), 366. See the bibliography on the *nautae Rhodanici* in Kmietowicz, *Folia Or.*, 11 (1970), 166 n. 10. See De Goeje, *Opuscula*, IV, 6ff.; Aronius, *Regesten*, no. 113 (p. 50); Jacobs, *Jew. Contr.* 196f.; Katz, *Jews*, 134f., who relies on Ibn Khurdādhbih’s fragment for his conjectures on the relations between the Frankish kingdom and the East. See Starr, *J. in the Byz. Emp.*, 33; on the impossible etymology Rayy-Rādhāniyya, see also Kmietowicz (above in this note), 167. Al-Zawāhira, *Biḡād al-shām*, 186, completely disregards the research literature on the Rādhānites, noting only that they were people from Firanja, which is France. See also Labīb, *Handels-gesch.*, 3, who also considers the Rādhānites to be Jews from Europe.

fro between the Islamic countries and the Christian countries; he also found support to this in the information about the existence of such unhindered voyages over many later generations. Jews continued their commercial travels between these two parts of the world even during the Crusades, when the relations between the two worlds were at a low ebb. Doehaerd, in 1953, also writes about *les juifs rhdanites*, who travel between the west and the east. In that year an article on the same issue was also published by Lombard. He recalled the export from the Carolingian kingdom to the Islamic countries, of swords and also of other export goods of the Frankish Empire; as to the Rādhānites, he also believed that they were from the south of France, even stating with certainty that their main base was Narbonne.

In a critical survey of Rabinowitz's book that he published in 1951, Cahen complained about the absence of additional sources for the economic activity of the Jews of the east. However, he did not dismiss the view that the Rādhānites were westerners, but nevertheless agreed about the Persian etymology of the term. Thirteen years later, in 1964, he emphasized the fact that while the easterners did not operate at all in western Europe, it is the Jews of the west who maintained the economic ties between the Muslim world and the Christian world. According to him, the Muslim rulers were not particularly interested in trade with the west, whereas the Fatimid rulers of Egypt, for example, preferred—likewise the Byzantine rulers—that Western European merchants come to their countries to trade, and not the opposite.

In that year, 1964, Cahen published another article, expressing deep doubt about the reliability of a number of Ibn Khurdādhbih's details, especially noting the difficulties regarding some of the way stations in the description of these merchants' routes, such as Faramā (ancient Pelusion, today's Balūza), which was supposed to be a main transit point from the Mediterranean Sea to Qulzum, even though we have no concrete information that it still served as a port in the Muslim period. On the other hand, Ashtor and Jacobi have proven that Faramā was indeed an active port in Islamic times; a letter of Nehorai b. Nissim testifies to the great activity in the eleventh century also in the port of Qulzum. A few years later (1971), Cahen returned to this subject and formulated five questions on the Rādhānite issue: (a) the nature of these merchants, whether they were a single body, or perhaps a number of groups, according to the languages they spoke and the segments of their journeys; (b) the fact that Ibn Khurdādhbih describes these routes as if they were "of the Jewish merchants", even though they were in general use; (c) the fact that this name, Rādhānites, is not mentioned in any other source; (d) the absence of any parallel evidence in the western sources, either Jewish or non-Jewish; (e) the absence of information about the Far East in that period in Europe, because, after all, Europe was, according to him, where these merchants hailed from.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ See Fischel, *Jews*, 317 n. 4 and in *Hist. Jud.*, 7 (1945), 38; Rabinowitz, *JQR*, NS 35 (1944/5), 253f.; idem, *Jew. Merch.*, 93-111. Following Rabinowitz, Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, 107, assumed that the center of the Rādhānites was in Christian Europe. Doehaerd, *CHM*, 1 (1954), 583; Lombard, *L'art mosan*, 12-18; Cahen, *RH*, 205 (1951), 119; in *Settimane*, 12 (1964), 423ff.; in *REJ*, 123 (1964), 499; and in *Der Islam*, 48 (1971), 333; cf. Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 36 (1966/7), 366. Skepticism regarding the influence of Ibn Khurdādhbih's

(346) Agreeing with the view that according to Ibn Khurdādhbih those merchants par excellence were European Jews, was C. Roth, in an article he published in 1966. Lombard, in a book published after his death, in 1971, still believed that the bases of those Rādhānite merchants were in a number of cities in the Meuse-Saône-Rhône area, and accepted the view whereby their name was derived from that of the Rhône River.

Also to be noted are two assumptions meant to explain who the Rādhānites were and the meaning of their name, which, to my mind, are both devoid of any real foundation. One is that of Kmietowicz, who suggested, in an article published in 1970, that the term Rādhānites is derived from *veredarii*, i.e., emissaries, runners. Since these merchants, he notes, sometimes also filled the role of diplomatic emissaries (such as that famous Isaac at the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd), or of translators, it was customary to refer to them by that byname. As to the term *veredarii* itself, it derives, he says, from *raeda* (*rheda*), a four-wheel chariot that served the Gallic kingdom's state postal service; and *veredus*, a postal horse. The development of the term is therefore: *veredari* > *redarii* > *redhani*[ya]. The other conjecture is that of Jacobi, who sought to prove, in an article published in 1971, that the Rādhānites were a group of Jewish informants, who mainly relayed information about what was happening on the routes; they were particularly suitable for this task because of their international ties. By the nature of things, there was a close tie between international trade and spying; he thus concludes that the nickname, Rādhānites, was actually a technical term for the intelligence service of that time, of the Abbasids. Ibn Khurdādhbih himself, was known as *ṣāhib al-barīd wa'l-khabar*, which just about means: head of the post and information.

When coming to briefly summarize this survey of the studies amassed over 150 years, by the efforts of important and dedicated scholars, we see that almost all of them have ignored Rādhān. Except for the assumption regarding Rayy, the accepted view was that these merchants belonged to West Europe. The main reasons for adhering to this view were: (a) Ibn al-Faḡīh's version, which has *rāhdāniyya* instead of *rādhāniyya*; (b) considerations regarding the socio-economic structure of the eastern Jewish communities in the Middle Ages (Schipper); (c) the fact that the point of embarkation of these merchants was, according to Ibn Khurdādhbih, in France (as understood by Simonsen and others).

This is, therefore, an important process from the general human standpoint. Due to an absence of orientation, or of not having paid enough attention, a complicated scientific interpretation which turns things over on their head has been created, and widely circulated, and the statements of a number of well-known scholars acquire the status of almost a primary source; at the same time there is disregard for the simple straight route of reliance on the sources of the period. Such things can indeed happen sometimes. As we shall subsequently see, these merchants were none other than those referred

fragment on the views regarding the status of the Jews in international trade in the Middle Ages was expressed earlier by Blumenkranz, *Juifs et Chrétiens*, 13f.; the matter of Farāmā: Ashtor, *JESHO*, 13 (1970), 183f.; Jacobi, *Der Islam*, 47 (1971), 256f.; regarding Qulzum see the letter of Nehorai b. Nissim, from the mid-eleventh century, about a caravan of 500 camels which arrived in Fustat from Qulzum, carrying spices and other goods: 258, b, ll. 17-18.

to by Ibn Khurdādhbih, i.e., Rādhānites, people of Rādhān. We shall also see that Ibn Khurdādhbih's information is generally truthful and reliable. We shall have to examine the relative value of the sources; the place where the merchants embarked; the meaning of *firanja*; details in the description of the goods; the country of the Rādhānites, i.e., Rādhān.³⁴⁶

(347) As to the sources, it should be borne in mind, that in addition to Ibn Khurdādhbih's version, there is also that of Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī, which is a shortened version, and which as a matter of course includes less information. Ibn al-Faqīh wrote his book in about AD 900, i.e., about two generations after Ibn Khurdādhbih; yet we only have a shortened version of his book, compiled by 'Alī Ibn Ja'far al-Shayzarī in AH 413, AD 1022, i.e., about two hundred years after Ibn Khurdādhbih. One should not totally disregard the possibility that Ibn al-Faqīh took his version not from Ibn Khurdādhbih, but from a source, perhaps a Syriac one, which was also used by the latter. My assumption regarding a Syriac source relies on the term which is the key word in the description at our disposal, *rādhāniyya* (i.e., Rādhānites). Actually, Ibn al-Faqīh's version is different: *rādhāniyya*, but still similar, of an identical pattern, and it is not *rahādina*, the plural of Rahdān (a clothing, or textile merchant). The only difference is the inserted *hā'*. In Ibn al-Faqīh, there is also the version *rahdāniyya* (i.e., with a short vowel after the *rā'*). It is highly likely that these forms come from the Syriac: *rhadhan*. It is only natural that such a version of *radhan*, should be found in a Syriac source, since this language uses, as do other dialects of

³⁴⁶ See Roth, *Dark Ages*, 25; Lombard, *L'Islam*, 290ff., and see the map in Lombard, no. 24, after p. 213. See Kmietowicz, *Fol. Or.*, 11 (1970), 169f.; Jacobi, *Der Islam*, 47 (1971), 261f.; after the publication of my article, which served as the basis for my present discussion, in *JESHO*, 17:99, (1974), Jacobi published another article, in *Der Islam*, 52:226, 1975, where he complains (p. 228) about the way I presented his view, that the Rādhānites were allegedly spies working in the service of the Abbasid intelligence; however, in that article, as well as in the present discussion, I presented Jacobi's view as expressed in his article. On the *barīd*, see Ibn Ṭīqqaqā, *al-Fakhrī*, 148: the first to have organized the *barīd* was Mu'āwiya; he established stations every 12 miles, where the horses were changed; *barīd* also became the name of such a distance. This system assured the rapid transmission of information; similar systems had existed in the Persian and Byzantine empires; cf. Morony, *Iraq*, 90f.; see Procopius Caes., *Anecdota*, xxx, 1-7; he states that such a postal service (which also had to assemble information) would manage some 200 miles a day. In an article published about three years after my own, on the Rādhānites, Ashtor, *Revue suisse d'histoire*, 27 (1977), 268f., challenged my views. His main argument referred to the appellation of these merchants, *rādhānīs*; if indeed they did not live in Rādhān itself anymore, why were they called by that name? My answer on this is that the proof is in that very fact, since a man used to be called by the name of his place of origin precisely when he left it and lived in a new one; even early scholars were aware of this; so, for instance, Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 114 (when writing about Jewish scholars): "one of those who came to *madīnat al-salām* (the city of peace, Baghdad) after the year (AH) 300, was Ibrāhīm al-Yahūdī, al-Tustarī"; i.e. he was called al-Tustarī precisely because he moved to Baghdad; in Tustar itself everybody is a Tustarī. (However, it is possible for a man to be called by the name of his place of origin even if he remained there all his life, if he became a famous scholar, or even a merchant often staying in places other than the one he inhabited). Lewicki, *Settimane*, (1980), 382, disregarded what I wrote in that article, though he mentioned it in his references, p. 383, n. 27. He even claims that Ibn Khurdādhbih stressed *à plusieurs reprises* (?) that these merchants set out from the Frankish lands, or from Spain (which he repeats on p. 389); however, he knows that the reference is to merchants coming not only from the Frankish lands, but also (the Arabic speaking among them) from the Maghrib, Egypt, Syria, Iraq.

Aramaic, to insert a *hā'* after the *rā'*, especially in proper nouns, such as *rhūmī=rūmī*. This phenomenon was transferred from the Greek *spiritus asper*, though, as stated, it is a general tendency in Aramaic. It was, therefore, expected of a Syriac writer that he sometimes write Rhadhan instead of Radhan. Ibn Khurdādhbih corrected, and used the accepted Arabic spelling of the name, *rādhān*; but the Syriac form, as stated before, might have been preserved by Ibn al-Faqīh. It thus appears that the source from which the description of the Rādhānite merchants was taken was a Syriac book, certainly earlier than the time of Ibn Khurdādhbih, who was writing in approximately the middle of the ninth century AD; it is possible to surmise that to a certain extent Ibn Khurdādhbih adjusted the contents of his description to the reality that existed in his time.

According to Ibn Khurdādhbih, these merchants hauled goods on their way back from the Maghrib, by which he apparently means: from Spain, and deviated from their route also to Firanja. This is not the case with the writer of the compendium of Ibn al-Faqīh, where the source of the goods is Firanja; he even passes over many details in the description of the routes. For example, he never mentions *al-baḥr al-gharbī*, the western sea, i.e., the Mediterranean, and he has no Arabian Peninsula, Constantinople, ⁶Ummān, Sind and Hind, Sūs al-Aqṣā, Tanja, Ifrīqiya, Miṣr, Damascus, Kūfa, Baṣra, Ahwāz, Fāris, Kirmān, the lands of the Ṣaqlība, Balkh, Transoxania. Neither does he mention the details regarding the land of the Khazars, that are in Ibn Khurdādhbih, neither those relating to the Caspian Sea; of the six languages that those merchants spoke, he omits *andalusī* and the language of the Ṣaqlība, and he has a different order for the other four. A number of goods are not mentioned, such as slaves, and others.

Table for Comparing the Two Sources

	Ibn Khurdādhbih	Ibn al-Faqīh
(1) name	the Jewish merchants <i>al-rādhāniyya</i>	the <i>al-rādhaniyya</i> Jewish merchants (version: <i>al- rahdāniyya</i>)
(2) languages	Arabic, Persian, <i>rūmī</i> , <i>ifranjī</i> , <i>andalusī</i> , <i>ṣaqlabī</i>	Persian, <i>rūmī</i> , Arabic, <i>ifranjī</i>
(3) source of western goods	The Maghrib	Firanja
(4) routes	(a) Maghrib-Firanja-western sea- Faramā-the caravans to Qulzum (25 parasangs)-the eastern sea-Jār-Judda Sind- Hind-China (b) (the Maghrib)-Firanja-the western sea Antioch- Jābiya(?)-Euphrates- Baghdad Tigris-Ubulla- ⁶ Ummān-Sind- Hind-China (c) Andalus or Firanja-Sūs al- Aqṣā- Tanja-Ifrīqiya-Miṣr- Ramla-Damascus- Kūfa- Baghdad-Ahwāz-Fāris- Kirmān- Sind-Hind-China	Firanja-Faramā-Qulzum-the sea- China Faramā-Antioch-Baghdad- Ubulla

	(d) beyond Byzantium-land of the Ṣaḡālība-Jurjān sea-Balkh-Transoxania- Wurut Tughuz Ghuzz	Armenia, Adharbayjān, Khurāsān, land of the Khazars, all are mentioned before the fragment itself
	(e) Faramā-Constantinople	
	(f) Faramā-Firanja	
(5) merchandise from the Maghrib (Ibn Kh.) or from Firanja (Ibn al-F.)	Slaves (men, women, children) silk fabrics, <i>khazz</i> hides, furs, <i>sammūr</i> (sable)	Silk fabrics, <i>khazz</i>
	Swords	
(6) goods from China	Musk, ^c <i>ūd</i> , camphor, cinnamon	Cinammon and other goods not detailed ³⁴⁷

(348) When turning to the details of the routes, we find first of all that in Ibn Khurdādhbih's version it states, in the preamble, that these merchants sailed from the east to the west, not as is in all of the translations of the fragment, except that of Serjeant. Ibn Khurdādhbih does not mention the goods that the Rādhānites hauled from the east to the west, when setting out. This is natural, because he himself and his readers were interested in what was arriving from distant lands. The Rādhānites, people of Rādhān, in the center of the caliphate, are those who brought those precious and scarce goods both from the west (Western Europe and Western Africa), and from China, and they would sell them, not only in the areas of the caliphate, but also in those of Byzantium and Firanja.

The mention of Jār and of Judda, i.e., the ports that linked al-Madīna and Makka with the outside world, shows that the Jews were permitted to enter the domains of Hījāz, from where they were expelled about 200 years earlier by ʿUmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, at the order of the Prophet of Islam. This detail in Ibn Khurdādhbih is confirmation of the tradition cited by Mālik b. Anas, that ʿUmar allowed Jews, Christians and Mājūs (Zoroastrians) to stay over in al-Madīna for three days to stock up.

Ubullā is Hūvlat in the geonic responsa, and was near Baṣra (above, sec. 287).

Sind and Hind are the northern parts of India. Qulzum is Kleisma (Klysmā), at the southern exit of the canal dug at the time of Trajan; today's Suez; it was an important Red Sea port.

The route in the land of the Berbers (par. c in the above table) has a number of interesting points. Ibn Khurdādhbih opens his discussion on it

³⁴⁷ See Ibn al-Faḡīh, 270. See on Ibn al-Faḡīh the article of Massé in *El²*; Ashtor, *RSI*, 81 (1969), 460f.; about the version of Ibn al-Faḡīh see the introduction of his book's editor, Viff. and also p. 330 note k. The matter of the *h*: Nöldeke, *Syr. Gr.*, 26; Duval, *Traité*, 37; Kramers, *Analectia Or.*, 1 (1954), 149, has already expressed the opinion that Ibn Khurdādhbih took his description from earlier sources, belonging to the period of Persian-Sasanid rule; Maqbul Ahmad, in his article 'Djughrāfiyā' in *El²*, assumed that he extracted his texts directly from a much earlier book of geography, perhaps a Pahlavi one, written in Sasanian Iran. The idea that there indeed existed, in Sasanid Iran, a literature describing routes, perhaps based on travel accounts, is confirmed by remnants of them, preserved in China, in the annals of the Hān dynasties; see on this: Hermann, in *Forschungen* (ed. Sieglin), 21 (1910), 44ff.; see also Goldziher, *MW*, 53 (1963), 11: Spain is included in the term *maghrib* (the west).

with Andalus, i.e., Muslim Spain, proof that this country was the main objective in the expedition of these merchants. From here, too, it may be learned that when Ibn Khurdādhbih says *maghrib*, i.e., west, he means Spain, because in the previous paragraphs he noted that the Rādhānites travelled to the west and acquired their goods there. From Andalus they went to Sūs al-Aqṣā, while some of them, making a shortcut to Firanja (apparently: Italy, see below), arrived from there by sea directly to Sūs al-Aqṣā. The area of Southern Morocco was called *aqṣā*, i.e., far away. A geonic responsum relating to the "land of the Berbers", and to the case of a convert to Christianity who has settled there, "among the gentiles", rules that he must give *ḥaliṣā* (release from levirate marriage) to his brother's widow, for if not, "she has no recourse". The journeys of the Rādhānites to that area were apparently connected to the fur trade (see below, about *khazz sūsī*) and textiles. Ibn Ḥawkal notes that in Sūs al-Aqṣā there was a group of "people from Iraq, and merchants from Baṣra, from Kūfa, and people from Baghdad"; further along he describes how numerous were the caravans that they organized and how great the profits that they produced.

Ifriqiya, in the fragment under discussion, is interpreted by some as Qayrawān; however, the name Ifriqiya has a number of meanings. A geonic responsum speaks of Qayrawān "which is in the land of Ifriqiya". A Christian source speaks of "Ifriqiya which is in five cities", i.e., the Libyan Pentapolis.³⁴⁸

(349) Firanja, the land of the Franks in Ibn Khurdādhbih, has been universally interpreted as France. However, this is by no means certain. It appears more likely that its primary meaning is that part of Italy under Frankish control. From an Arabic source we can learn that Bertha, daughter of Lothar, "queen of Ifranja", sent, among other items, swords, 20 *ṣaqlabī* slaves and 20 maidservants to Caliph al-Muktafī (902-908) in AH 293, AD

³⁴⁸ From this point on, the discussion will deal mainly with details and comments which are not found in other studies. Comments on various details and terms in Ibn Khurdādhbih's text can be found in all studies on the Rādhānites which I mention. One should add also Lewicki, *Żródła*, 119-152; Serjeant, *Ars. Isl.*, 15-16 (1968), 85; in Ibn Khurdādhbih's text, as edited by De Goeje (BGA) it says: from east to west. The manuscript used by him is now in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna, with the shelf mark Mixt. 783. I am grateful to Dr. Helene Loebenstein, who was Director of the Manuscripts Collection there, for providing me with a photocopy of fol. 64v of the manuscript where one can see that east is mentioned first, see in the Bodleian MS 993, as edited by Sprenger (above sec. 342). See Mālik, *Muwatṭā*, no. 873, pp. 311f.; Ibn Hubayra, 99a: a *kāfir* is allowed to enter Hijāz as travelers do, but not to remain there; a merchant may stay three days, and longer if he gets permission from the *imām*. See Samhūdī, II, 72: the son of the *ra's al-jālūt* (the exilarch) visits al-Madīna accompanied by Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr (about AD 690). See al-Ṭihāwī, *Mu'taṣar*, I, 247; Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb made concessions to those who enter al-Madīna coming from Palestine carrying goods; they only had to pay half the tax (*'ushr*, a tithe); obviously that refers to non-Muslims. See Lopez and Raymond, *Med. Trade*, 31 n. 63: supposedly the silk fabrics were brought from Spain, or perhaps from Byzantium; the land of the Berbers: *Ōṣar ha-g. to Yevāmot*, 34. See Idrīsī (Dozy), 62. On the clothing industry in Sūs al-aqṣā, unequalled by any in the whole world, see: Ibn Ḥawqal, 61. It may be assumed that his description, dated to about AD 950, also refers to Jewish merchants. Arab authors usually omitted this detail; so, for instance, al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, I, 213, who omits the word *al-yahūd* when citing the text of Ibn Khurdādhbih on the Rādhānites. See also Canard, *Hespéris*, 39 (1952), 297, in the note, who assumes that the Isma'īlī influence in the Maghrib may be in part ascribed to those exclusive bonds between southern Iraq and Sijilmāssa. Qayrawān: *Ōṣar ha-g. to Ketubbōt*, 162. See *Synax. Jacob.*, 43.

906 (Bertha was then the wife of Adalbert, the ruler of the march of Tuscany). Ibn al-Nadīm (tenth century), who also presents the story of the ties between Bertha queen of Firanja and al-Muktafi, notes that he saw with his own eyes the *al-firanjiyya* swords inscribed with Firanjī script. He certainly meant Latin characters, and it appears that Firanjī, the language of the Franks, meant, in Ibn Khurdādhbih: Latin. That meaning of Firanja is also confirmed in a Geniza manuscript, “queries of our Lord and Master Meshullam, son of our Lord and Master Anqolinimos(!) of the city of Lucca, which is in the country of Firanja, to our Master Sherira Gaon and Hayy Chief Judge”, i.e., Lucca, in Italy, was said to be in Firanja. Sicily is so close to *ifranja* that you can see it from there, says al-İṣṭakhrī.

Nevertheless, a likely assumption is that France was also included in the voyages of these Babylonian Jewish merchants; it may be assumed that Hārūn b. Yaḥyā, whose journey is cited by Ibn Rusta, was that kind of international merchant. He embarked on a journey from Rome to Burjān (i.e., Burgundy) towards the end of the ninth century; since 879, Burgundy was under the rule of Boso, Count of Vienna and Duke of Provence and Lombardy, who was the brother-in-law of Charles the Bald. Hārūn b. Yaḥyā was captured by the Byzantines, but he was ransomed; he also visited other places, including Venice and Salonica.³⁴⁹

(350) Let us now turn to some details in the description of the goods. The geonic literature has information about slave traffic, also about the trade in textiles, spices etc., more than enough to negate Schipper’s view about the insignificant role that he believed was played by the eastern Jews in international trade. The wealthiest of the Jews in the tenth century

³⁴⁹ Bertha’s gifts: Ibn al-Zubayr, *Dhakhā’ir*, 48f.; see the article by Levi della Vida, *RSI*, 66:21, 1954, discussing these relations based on Arabic sources edited by Hamidullah. Bertha was the widow of Theobald, count of Arles, and married Adalbert (‘the rich’), in about AD 895. She became ruler of Toscana after his death in 915, until her death in March 925; cf. Mor, *l’Età*, I, 47, 57, 73, 82, 90 n. 17; Ibn al-Nadīm, I, 20; *firanjiyya*: cf. Yāfi’i, *Mir’āh*, II, 314: Qayṣar is a *firanjī* word (“he was called Qayṣar since his mother died when giving birth, and they slashed her belly and took out the baby”). Queries to Rav Meshullam: TS Loan 90, ed. Ginzberg, *Geon.*, II, 57; see Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 42, who refers to that manuscript and notes that Lucca in Italy is found—according to this manuscript—in Firanja; this was also the name of Charlemagne’s kingdom. This fact, that the term Firanja also included Italy, was already noted by Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 488, n. 35. See al-İṣṭakhrī, 70. Jacobi, *Der Islam*, 47 (1971), 256, interpreted *Firanja* in Ibn Khurdādhbih to mean southern France, which seems odd to me. See also Ibn Ḥawqal, 203, who writes that Sicily is close to Firanja, meaning obviously: to Italy. Jacobi also has another idea, *ibid.*, 253 n. 5, that the *Rūm* in Ibn Khurdādhbih means Rome, not Constantinople (or Byzantium), since Constantinople would be called by him: Qusṭanṭīniyya; this is not a valid argument, as even in the Qur’ān (*sūrat al-rūm*), *Rūm* means Byzantium, and see in Ibn Khurdādhbih himself: وهي بالرومية هاليونليس (Hellenopolis), i.e. *rūmī* = Greek; *ibid.*, 104, Ibn Khurdādhbih describes the western part of the land of the *Rūm*, after having described the eastern one, and says that *Rūm* begins there with رومية وسقلية, Rome and Sicily; whereas on p. 155 (in describing the *Rādhānites*), he says خلف رومية, where *rūmiyya* does not mean Rome, but—according to the itinerary ascribed by him to these merchants—it meant: behind Byzantium. See also Zeki Validi Togan, 321, who suggests that *saqālība* might also mean Germans, following Khawārizmī, *Sūrat al-arḍ*, 105 (no. 1593): بلاد غرمانيا وهي أرض الصقالبة. On the land of the Khazars, see Minorsky, *Ḥudūd*, 13: Tughuz Ghuzz should be: Toquz-oghuz, i.e. nine Oghuz, and see his discussion there, whether the Uigurs are meant, or others. On Hārūn b. Yaḥyā: see Ibn Rusta, 130; cf. the entry Hārūn b. Yaḥyā (by M. Izzedin), in *EF²*, Lewicki, *Settimane*, 1977 (ed. 1978), 448; Miquel, *Géogr. humaine*, II, 362; see also: Halphen, *Charlemagne*, 369f., 380, 391 (on the matter of Burgundy).

Baghdad, such as the sons of Neṭīra and others, certainly did not constitute a singular and sudden phenomenon. On the contrary, there undoubtedly was a continuity and tradition of generations in the existence of such families or groups. The story of Nathan the Babylonian and other snippets of information testify to the existence of this social stratum and of its great and growing importance from the socio-economic standpoint. Families and figures of the kind of Menashe al-Qazzāz ("silk dealer"), Ya'qūb b. Killis, the Tustari brothers etc., who belong to a period 150-200 years later, about whom we have information from Arabic sources and Geniza documents, also belonged to this stratum of great Jewish merchants and monetary experts. In subsequent chapters I will be dealing in detail with such issues. Here I will only note that the parallel sources point to Andalus, which is Muslim Spain, as a slave traffic center and as the place where some of them were castrated, something which therefore matches the description of Ibn Khurdādhbih (see above, sec. 338, the discussion of the castration problem, which both the Torah and the scholars forbade the Jew).

The information about the commercial ties with the area of the Khazars had special significance regarding the issue of the connection between the Jews and the kingdom of the Khazars; as to the ties with China, we may have here a hint of the connections of the Rādhānites with this country in the letter of a Jewish merchant, written in Judeo-Persian, apparently from the second half of the eighth century, that was discovered in the frontier area of Western China, in the Khutān ruins. It speaks of commerce in sheep, textiles, and also, perhaps, copper. The perfumes and spices from China had international renown; "*zanjabīl* (ginger) and *dārshīn* (cinnamon) are things brought from the land of China", says a geonic responsum. We also have information about Jews in Khanqū (apparently, Canton) in Mas'ūdī (that others also copied); ships arrive there from Baṣra, he writes.

There is thus no doubt that Ibn Khurdādhbih's report preserved a faithful description of the commercial routes famous in his day, even though it may be, as we have seen, that the core of his description is taken from an older source. It was only natural for him to tell his readers about those routes where one transported those rare commodities sought by many, goods which were usually considered luxuries in those days. As we have seen, the place where these merchants embarked is to be found in the eastern part of the Muslim world. It is Jews who lived in this part of the world who were, therefore, the haulers and distributors of those goods. Many are the details of Ibn Khurdādhbih's description that are confirmed by parallel sources, some of which I have mentioned above. The role of the Jews in international trade is also proven by sources in the geonic literature as well as in Geniza writings and Muslim sources, that testify to Jewish families, groups of merchants and financiers in later generations.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, 107, already expressed the view that the activity of the Rādhānites was a continuation of the Jews' trade in pre-Islamic times. Ashtor, *JESHO*, 13 (1970), 187f., stresses the fact that the goods mentioned by Ibn Khurdādhbih are most sought after and expensive ones. See the Khutān letter: Margoliouth, *JRAS*, 1903, 735; see also Utas, *Or. Suec.*, 17:123, 1968, with bibliographical details on pp. 123f.; cf. Fischel, *Hist. Jud.*, 7(1945), 48; since in his view the Rādhānites belonged to Western Europe, he did not see any relationship between Ibn Khurdādhbih's mention of their knowledge of Persian and the letter's language. The gaon's responsum: Assaf, *Resp.* (1929), 160 (MS Antonin

(351) Now, where is the country of the Rādhānites, Rādhān? We have already seen that Rādhān and Rādhān are but two spelling forms of one geographical unit. To some extent, the divergent descriptions of this area in the Arabic sources is what led many fine students to ignore the simple and clear possibility, to wit, that Rādhān is the homeland of these merchants. For example, al-Bakrī (died in 1094) describes Rādhān as if it was one of the villages in the *sawād* (district) meaning *sawād* Baghdad; thus it is clear that the term was no longer in widespread use in the eleventh century, for Rādhān was not after all the name of a village, but the ancient name of what was later called the *sawād* (i.e., the district) of Baghdad. Likewise, Ibn al-Athīr says that Rādhān was a village in Baghdad! Similarly, al-Suyūfī. Steinschneider accepted these statements at face value, believing that Rādhān was a village in the *sawād*, i.e., "the cultivated area of Mesopotamia". Yāqūt (died in 1229), who had better sources, wrote of Rādhān *al-asfal* (lower) and *al-a'lā* (upper), which are two districts in the *sawād* of Baghdad, which had many villages.

If we now turn to the Syriac sources and the Christian Arabic sources, we shall see that Rādhān was the name of an entire area. In the days of the Nestorian patriarch Isaac, at the beginning of the fifth century, we find the term *rdny* (to be read: *Radanē*, in the plural), i.e., Rādhāns. The metropolitan of Bē garmē, Mar Savrīshū^c, was educated in the land of Rādhān: *be-atrā de-radan*. The Nestorian Mārī b. Sulaymān mentions the bishop of Radhan along with the bishops (*miṭrāns*) of Jundisābūr and of Karkh; he cites the tradition about Mar Mārī al-Salīḥ (the emissary), one of the emissaries (*mursalūn*), of Jewish origin (end of the first century), who was baptized into Christianity and converted many Jews in Babylonia to Christianity, in Awhāz and the Tigris districts, in Fāris and in Kaskhar and in the two *rādhāns*, *al-rādhānān*. A man by the name of Helqānā built 300 churches and monasteries in the *radhans*. A parallel Syriac source tells of the coming of Adai and of Mārī, the holy emissaries, "to our district"; when they arrived in Karkh they met a man by the name of Joseph and baptized him into Christianity, and it was he who built the church that was known by the name of *dayrā de-bēt yōsēf*. It is Jews in the Rādhāns who destroyed the well built by one of the emissaries, Sāvā. The Persian governor (*marzubān*) of the Nabaṭ country (which is Bēt Aramayē) had his residence in the area of Rādhān. The Syriac spelling of the name is Radan (sometimes Radān), and its pronunciation, was, in any case, apparently Rādhān.

In the Muslim tradition, as well, the name is Rādhān (usually in the plural or dual: Rādhānāt, Rādhānān), and in a relatively earlier period (about the first three centuries of Islam) it was clear that this was the name of an area. Balādhurī writes that Sa'd b. Abī'l-Waqqāṣ sent the army eastwards to conquer Daqūqa and Khānījār (=Khāniqīn), via the *rādhānāt*. A glance at the map proves that the route to Daqūqa and Khāniqīn passes in the area of Madā'in-Nahrwān-Daskara-ʿUkbarā. Ṭabarī, relating the events of AH 66 (=AD 685), mentions, that in order to arrive at the area of Mosul, it was necessary to go via the *rādhānāt*. Rādhān was also an administrative unit. On this matter we have, as has been stated, the testimony of Ibn Khurdādh-

891); Khanqū, Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, I, 302f.; Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ*, 210; Abū'l-Fidā', *Mukhtaṣar*, II, 51.

bih himself, who notes that the *tassūj* (district) of al-Rādhān included 19 localities (*rasātiq*) with 309 threshing-floors (*bayādīra*), that produced 4,800 *kurr*, and brought in taxes totaling 120,000 dirhams of the *warāq* kind per annum. The Rādhān district is listed by him along with Buzurj Sābūr, Nahr Būq, Kalwādhā, Nahr Bīn, Daskara, and the three districts of Nahrwān (upper, middle and lower). Yāqūt says that Nahr Bīn (Bīl) is the district in the *sawād* of Baghdad, near the Būq canal. Le Strange understood this in the reverse manner, i.e., that one of the Rādhāns was a water canal that irrigated the other, which was a district. However, as a matter of fact, it may be seen that according to what Ibn Khurdādhbih writes, the two names were given both to the canals and the districts; a single name that notes both the water canal and the district is a very common phenomenon in the geographical thesaurus of names of this area. Kiepert writes about the *nahr* (canal of) Rādhān, which was used to irrigate the plain east of the Tigris. That canal was known by the name of the Wān canal, which is the Nahrwān. The governor of Rādhān was accused of embezzling monies in 251 (AD 865). ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Abī'l-Shawārib was appointed in 284 (AD 897) as *qāḍī* of Baghdad, of some other communities and of al-Rādhānān (the two Rādhāns). Mu'nīs appointed Abū Hījā as governor, of among other places, also of Buzurj Sābūr (ʿUkbarā), the Rādhānān, Daqūqā, and Khānījār, in 317 (=929). Ibn al-Athīr mentions al-Rādhānāt and notes that in 330 (i.e., AD 941) a governor was appointed over the district. Al-Akhṭal wrote a poem about the suffering of the clans of Qays, "between Rādhān and al-Ḥaḍr" (the Roman Hatra, on the Tharthar river, near Mosul; above, sec. 295).

In another of his poems al-Akhṭal sings the praise of the fertility and wealth of the Rādhān district, where he himself resided when he wrote the poem; we have seen that Ibn Khurdādhbih also mentions the fertility of the area. Ibn al-Athīr writes that during the drought of 495 (i.e., AD 1102) wheat was brought from Rādhān at 20 dinars a *kurr*. Rādhān was famous for its dates, the poets also praise them. Rādhān was even a symbol of fertile soil in the conquered countries. A tradition ascribed to the Prophet warns the believers against coveting property and lands for the desires of this world: "what is in al-Madīna is in al-Madīna, and what is in Rādhān is in Rādhān".³⁵¹

³⁵¹ See al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, I, 626; on the term *sawād*, cf. Le Strange, *Lands*, 24, n. 1; in later periods than those which belong here, who said *sawād* meant southern Iraq. Ibn al-Athīr, *Lubāb*, I, 449; al-Suyūfī, *Lubb*, 112. Steinschneider, *Jeschurun*, 6(1868), 28f., n. 1; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 729; *rdny*, see Chabot, *Synod. Or.*, 33, 34. See also the index *ibid*. Sawrīshū: Chabot, *Mél. D'archéol. et d'hist.*, 16 (1896), 266 (no. 92, p. 50 of the original); Mārī b. Sulaymān, *al-Majdal*, 3, 99; Joseph, the convert who built the church: Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 45; for the present discussion it is the mention of the Rādhāns which is of significance; as to the traditions themselves and the personalities mentioned in them, they are of a legendary nature and devoid of any historical value; see Labourt, *Christianisme*, 9ff. Destruction of the well: Hoffmann, *ibid.*, 78. The *marzubān*: Akhbār (Scher), 62; Syriac spelling: Nöldeke, *ZDMG*, 33 (1879), 325 n. 1; see also the letter of Timotheus (the Nestorian catholicos, about AD 800), in Braun, *OC*, 1 (1910), 310, II. 1, 2, where we find both *rdn* and *rd'n*. Sa'd Ibn Abī'l-Waqqās: Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 265; see the map in Le Strange, *Lands*, facing p. 25. See Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 644f. Ibn Khurdādhbih, 12. The *kurr*: above, sec. 241. Yāqūt, *Buldān*, V, 836; Ibn Serapion, 281; on *nahr Bīn*, see De Goeje *ZDMG*, 39 (1885), 2, who was unable to read the name correctly; see Kiepert, *Zeitschr. d. Ges. f. Erdkunde*, 18 (1883), 18, and see there the map at the end of the volume. The

(352) Clearly, in the ninth century, Rādhān was the name of a single district, while previously we find it in the plural, Rādhānāt (apparently, upper, middle and lower), or in the dual, Rādhānān; as to the Syriac sources, and in the Christian Arabic-language writings, it had a broader meaning. Similar to other geographical names, the meaning of this name also changed with the times. Therefore, it is important to examine other names linked to it.

A close bond exists between the name Rādhān and the name Jūkhā. One may glean from the Syriac sources that these names are virtually synonymous. Rādhān—Gūkhī (for the Syrians also: Kūkhā) was part of the *iparkhia* of Bēt Aramayē along with Ṭirhān, and it had its own bishop: “the great metropolitan who occupies the chair of Kūkhā” (AD 410). Mentioned is “Yoḥānān the *epīsqōpā* of Gūkhī”, i.e., the bishop of Rādhān; Chabot, the editor, could not explain Gūkhī. There was a story about a preacher (apparently a Monophysite) who came “to the area of Gūkhē”; King Arṭabānūs ruled “in Qṭisīfūn and in Gūkhī”; in Greek it was Kōkhē; *campi Cauchae* in Pliny. Thus it is clear that there were two forms of the same name, with a ‘g’ and with a ‘k’, and it appears that the primary meaning of the name was the area of the Kūkhīs—Kūkhē, in Arabic: *akwākh*, and also Jūkhā. The main church in Madā’in, i.e., Māḥōzē, is called *bī‘at al-akwākh*, *bī‘at kūkhē*, “for there were the pits (sing.: *kūkh*) of the peasants who worked for Mardanshāh, governor of Ctesifon” (about AD 80). The Nestorian patriarchs would be appointed (‘consecrated’) in the church in Madā’in known as al-Akwākh. Clearly, that main church in Madā’in was called the church of the *kūkhē*, which is *akwākh* in Arabic, which is *jūkhā* in Arabic, which is Rādhān. As we shall soon see, Māḥōzē (Madā’in) was the center of the Rādhān area.

Ṭabarī says that Upper Rādhān was in the land (*arḍ*) of Jūkhā; the army marched from Sura northwards, passed through the *arḍ jūkhā*, came to the *rādhānāt* and turned (northwards) to the land of Mosul (in 66, AD 685); *arḍ jūkhā* was like “one continuous excavation”, which teaches us just how much it was irrigated land; al-Zubayr b. al-Ma’ḥūz and his men (the *khawārij*) left Ahwāz, crossed *arḍ jūkhā* and turned along the Nahrwān, continued along the Tigris until they reached Madā’in. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, Mani, the prophet of the Manichaeans, was from Jūkhā (as it should be read). Dimashqī writes that *baṭn jūkhā* (here, *baṭn* apparently means: area) stretched between the ancient riverbed of the Tigris and the

embezzling governor: Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, III, 1554; the *qāḍī*, *ibid.*, IV, 2161; Mu’nis: Ibn Miskawaih, *Tajārīb*, I, 193; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 202, 383; al-Akḥṭal, 135; al-Ḥaḍr: Le Strange, *Lands*, 98; see al-Akḥṭal, 310; cf. Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 315; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, X, 336, about the drought; praise of the dates: Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, II, 935; al-Farazdaq, 180. The tradition ascribed to the Prophet: Yahyā b. Ādam, *Kharāj* (Cairo), 76 (no. 254). Later Muslim traditionalists interpreted this tradition in a different way, explaining that it referred to a place called Rādhān, in the vicinity of al-Madīna, thus Sam’ānī, *Ansāb*, VI, 27; Samhūdī, *Wafā’*, II, 310, who cites al-Majd, who is al-Firūzābādī (cf. Samhūdī, I, 7), but it is not extant in his *Qāmūs*; the source of the idea that Rādhān is near al-Madīna can only be in the above-mentioned tradition, otherwise Samhūdī, who lived in al-Madīna, would have known about it and told about it. See in this matter the doubts of Nawawī, *Tahdhīb*, III, 131, citing al-Ḥāzimī, who flourished in the twelfth century AD, from his book *al-Amākin* (‘the places’); see GAL, S1, 605. Jacobi, *Der Islam*, 52 (1975), 237f., uncritically believes all these reports and similar ones, without exception, and counts three Rādhāns; besides that of Iraq, he finds another two in Ḥijāz, which never existed.

riverbed in his day, east of the Tigris (on the side of Fāris and Khūzistān). Yāqūt notes that there was also a water canal called Jūkhā; around that canal was a broad district (*kūra*) within the *sawād* of Baghdad, on its eastern side, between Khāniqīn and Khūzistān, and it was the richest district in that *sawād*; however (so it appears), the situation changed for the worse after the Tigris changed its course, flowing away from this district. He has rhymes in praise of the wealth of the district's agriculture. According to him, Jūkhā's location was west of al-Rādhānāt; however, according to Ṭabarī: south of al-Rādhānāt; elsewhere Ṭabarī says that Jūkhā is the entire area between the Tigris and the Nahrwān canal; the earlier the information, the more similar it is to what the Christian sources (Syriac and Arabic) say. Al-Ḥajjāj appoints Abū Ḥarb b. Abī'l-Aswad as governor of Jūkhā. The fact that Jūkhā extended along the two sides of the Khurāsān route, is confirmed by Ṭabarī regarding the appointment of a governor "on the Khurāsān road until the central part (*batn*) of Jūkhā". Similarly, the name Rādhān was used in the ninth century mainly to note the area around the Khurāsān route, as can be seen by the list of places where Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭayī had to collect taxes (apparently in: 892), in the area where the Rādhānān linked with the Khurāsān road. Dīnawarī writes that ʿAbdallāh b. Wahb went via Baghdad—before the time when Baghdad existed—and from there to *ard jūkhā*. He also says that Khusraw Anūshirwān, king of Persia, divided Jūkhā into six districts (*tasāʾij*): Ṭisfūn (=Ctesiphon), which is Madāʾin (i.e.: Māhōze), which the Nabateans (i.e., in Aramaic) called Ṭisfūn(?); Jāzar; Kalwādhā; Nahr Būq; Jalūlā; Nahr al-Malik; and ordered that the *kūra* of Jūkhā be called by his name: Khusrawmāh (the district of Khusraw). He also knows about Jūkhā, that Sām (i.e., Shem) the son of Noah would spend the winter there, and the summer he would spend in Mosul, travelling from one place to the other along the eastern bank of the Tigris, thus the route was called "Sām Rāh". Moreover: ʿAlī appointed Yazīd b. Qays al-Arḥabī as governor of Madāʾin and all of Jūkhā.

Kūkha (Kūkhē)—Jūkhā is mentioned in the two Talmuds: "Elam and Gūwkay are in a coma" (PT *Yevāmōt* a, 3b, meaning that they do not maintain the nuptial laws, also below); and there are additional, extremely corrupted versions: PT *Qiddūshīn* iv, 65d; BT *Berākhot* 17b; BT *Qiddūshīn* 71b, 72a; the München MS of BT, *Qidd.*, 71b; in the additions to the *ʿArūkh*: Gāwbay(!), explained as "a place in Babylonia", and there are more. In a geonic responsum: "Gūnayē, which is a place behind Babylon on the eastern bank of the Tigris, behind Nahrwān, still called by the Ishmaelites Gūkhā". It appears that it was customary to compare Gūkhā with Palestine—as Rav says in Genesis Rabbā.³⁵²

³⁵² See Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 259; Sarre u. Herzfeld, *Reise*, I, 61f. n. 4; the metropolitan: Vööbus, *Canons*, 57 n. 4 (to par. 7); the bishop Yōhānān: Chabot, *Synod. Or.*, 608 n. 3 (AD 790); see *ibid.*, the index, 672: *localité non identifiée*. The preacher: Ishoʿyahb, *Epist.*, 251; see *ibid.*, 181, Duval's translation: *in regione Radanensi*. Artabanus: Pognon, *Inscr. mand.*, 9 n. 2, who explains that Gūkhā in Syriac is: *atrā de-gūkhē*, the zone between the Tigris and the border of Persia. Cf. Nöldeke, *Mand. Gramm.*, 319 n. 5; Schaeder, *Der Islam*, 14 (1925), 23 n. 2. See Plinius, *Hist. nat.*, VI xxxi, 129f., and cf. the discussion in Schaeder, *ibid.*, 22f., who is wrong when he argues that Plinius was mistaken; since indeed the zone went all along the Tigris. The church of al-Madāʾin: Mārī b. Sulaymān, *al-Majdal*, 5, 40. The consecration of the patriarchs: *Akhbār* (Scher), II, 57 (referring to the beginning of the sixth

(353) When we now look more closely at the area of Rādhān, we see that its northern border was in the Batt canal. According to Ibn al-Athīr, Batt was a village in the Mosul district. The only canal between it and the *sawād* (undoubtedly meaning *the sawād*, i.e., the district of Baghdad) was the Ḥawlāyā canal, in the upper Rādhān in the *ard jūkhā*. In the parallel fragment in Ṭabarī, it says that Ḥawlāyā was a canal between the *taḥūm* (border) of Mosul and the *sawād* (of Baghdad), noting the close proximity of Ḥawlāyā to Batt. The link between Ḥawlāyā and Rādhān is prominent in that fragment of Ṭabarī's. The Khawārizmī raid in 1225, is said to have been against Batt and the Rādhānāt. The Batt canal was, therefore, the most northernmost part, while the southern part was also known by the name of Tamarrā, and it appears that it actually branched out of the main canal that was called Ḥawlāyā, or Dī'ālā, or Khālīṣ. This main canal connected the Nahrwān canal (which was the eastern border of the area, parallel to the Tigris) and the Tigris. According to Suhrāb this main canal (the Khālīṣ) was especially large, broad enough for ships; it linked to the Tigris south of Baghdad. As for Tamarrā, according to Yāqūt, this was a canal as well as a district; he cites a legend (also told by others) about Tamarrā and Nahrwān, which were the children of Jūkhā. According to Le Strange, the three were parts of one canal; *al-qāṭil al-kisrāwī* (the king's canal, or the Khusraw canal) was the beginning of that canal, while the overall name of the canal was Nahrwān; the northern part was known as Tamarrā, and the Khālīṣ was its branch. According to Mas'ūdī these were the branches of the Tigris: Dī'ālā, Nahr Bīn, Nahrwān; there were some towns in that area, such as Ba'qūbā, the city of Nahrwān, 'Abartā, Uskaḥ.

The Nestorian sources also mention Ḥawlāyā, but as a city, Ḥālē, which was said to have been the capital of the Rādhān district. The most important of the Nestorian Nisibis scholars, Mar Abbā (mid-sixth century), was a native of Ḥālē in Rādhān. The picture derived, is that ancient Rādhān was the district between the Tigris and the Nahrwān canal, which was also known as Kūkhē (the pits) or Gūkhā; the Arabs called it Jūkhā. By the tenth

century AD); cf. Fiey, *L'Or. syrien*, 12 (1967), 398, where on pp. 402-406 he was not able to understand the meaning of the name; *idem*, *Jalons*, 40f.; see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, 933, 755, 644. Ibn al-Nadīm, 327f., and see there also p. 340, about Manī, who was "from a village in Jūkhā on the Nahrwān". See the discussion in Klima, *Manis Zeit*, 277; Dimashqī, *Nukhba*, 96; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, II, 123; see the verses also in Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 403, who says that Jūkhā is a city (*balad*) in Iraq, on the Jūkhā canal. Ṭabarī, see above in this note, and also I, 3367 (referring to AD 657); Abū Ḥarb: Ibn Qutayba, *Ma'ārif*, 435; Ṭabarī (see above), III, 1736; al-Tāyī: Hilāl al-Ṣābi', *Wuzarā'*, 15; al-Dīnawarī, 2, 73, 153; cf. on Jūkhā also El-Ali, *Sumer*, 27 (1971), 174ff.; Morony, *Iran*, 20 (1982), 18f. (and there, also, a map of *ard jūkhā*); see a suggestion of identification of the Jūkhā canal: the Mahrūt canal, in Adams, *Land*, 90. The *Arūkh*: see the additions edited by S. Buber, *Grätz Jub. Vol.*, 36ff., from manuscripts in Parma and in Cambridge; Harkavy, *Resp.*, no. 399 (p. 213), and see his note on p. 379; *Ōsar ha-g.*, to *Berākhōt*, 44; to *Qiddūshīn*, 175f.; Shorr, *He-Halutz*, 13 (1889), 89; Oppenheimer, *Bab. Jud.*, 129-132, errs when doubting the identification proposed by Harkavy: Gūnāy = Gūbāy = Gūkhāy, and from what was said above it appears clearly that in all these places Gūkhā, Gūkhā'ē are meant. See also *idem*, *ibid.*, 146, and he errs again when changing one location into two different ones: Gūkhā'ē and Gubbā'ē, which are both nothing but Gūkhā'ē; also his interpretation of *tekhiltā* as: blue does not seem to be acceptable, instead it means: the end, the margin. As regards Yu'anē, see also De Goeje, *ZDMG*, 39 (1885), 2, who opposes the views of Neubauer and of Berliner, that it is Nahrwān; but it is not Wānī either, as proposed by the three of them. See *Gen. Rabbā*, 16:2 (Theodor and Albeck 145, in the notes). See also Berliner, *Beiträge*, 19; Obermeyer, 126f.

century Arab geographers the area was considered part of Fāris, and the center of this area was afterwards in Samarrā. The ancient name of the area can be discovered in the name Bihrādhān, which is from the Syriac: Bēt Rādhān; later they pronounced and wrote it: Baradān. Abū Nuwās wrote a poem about Dayr (the monastery of) Bihrādhān. According to Yāqūt, citing Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, Baradān was only the Arabic form of Bihrādhān (as it should be read, as the spelling there is corrupted); which is where Nebuchadnezzar brought the Judean captives. For the editor of Ibn Taghrī Bardī, it became a "village seven parasangs from Baghdad". We also find: Māh (district of) Bihrādhān.³⁵³

(354) We know of some localities in the area of Rādhān. The first of these is the one the Arabs called al-Madā'in, earlier known by the Aramaic name of Māhōzē (both of them mean: the cities). It was actually a group of cities, the most important of which were Ctesiphon, the Sasanid capital, on the eastern bank of the Tigris, and Seleucia, on the western. Above, I have already written about the al-Madā'in church that was in Akwākh, i.e., in Jūkhā; this means that the main church of the area of Rādhān-Jūkhā was in Madā'in. The link between Rādhān and Madā'in is clear from the details of the appointment of Hudhayfa b. Hisl (=Husayl=al-Yamān) as the governor of the country beyond the Tigris, i.e., Jūkhā, according to Abū Yūsuf; of Madā'in, according to Ibn al-Athīr and Ibn Ḥajar; of the *sawād*, the district beyond the Tigris, according to Balādhurī and Ṭabarī. This appointment was after the conquest, at around 640. About 45 years later, Iṣḥāq b.

³⁵³ Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IV, 414; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 933; sometimes the spelling is Baṭṭ, see Ibn al-Ṣābūnī, *Takmila*, 56, and note 4 of the editor; cf. Dhahabī, *Mushtabāh*, I, 70, saying that it is a village on the route to Daqūqā (i.e. in the northeastern part of the region). See Suhrāb, 128; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 812; Le Strange, *Lands*, 57-60; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1002; Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 53. Hāle, see Labourt, *Christianisire*, 163. Mar Abbā: see Vööbus, *Nisibis*, 161. See on the district in general: Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 71 n. 634; in his opinion, it began on the slopes of Hamrīn in the north, and from there it ran southwards along the Tigris. See Muqaddasī, *Aḡālīm*, 357; Iṣṭakhrī, 102; and see a general description of the zone in Sarre u. Herzfeld, *Reise*, I, 57 and see n. 3 *ibid.*, about the early names of Tāmarā, and the map facing p. 80, clearly showing that the channels Nahrwān and Diyālā covered the region from Madā'in (south of Baghdad) to Samarrā, along the eastern bank of the Tigris. During many generations the region was a battlefield for the internal wars in the caliphate, and the chroniclers note that it was the starting point for rebellious movements, the Khārijīs and others; see for instance Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 894; III, 384f., 711, 1016f. (= Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VI, 341), 1689f., Bēt Rādhān, so also in Morony, *Iran*, 20 (1982), 19; Abū Nuwās, 83; Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 553; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, III, 32, n. 7 of the editor. Māh Bihrādhān, see Schwarz, *Iran*, 445 n. 5. Often the copyists would err (as would the printers) and would spell, instead of Rādhān, Bihrādhān: Zādhān, Bihzādhān; this is how Schwarz, *ibid.*, 667 (and also in the index) devised a place called Māh Bihzādhān. Schwarz, as well as others, did not grasp the special meaning of *sawād* in these sources, thinking that it means southern Iraq, and assumed therefore that there was an error in Yāqūt but one does not err if one reads correctly: Bihrādhān, and understand that the subject is the *sawād*, i.e. the district, of Baghdad. See Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, I, 2633. On Māh Bihrādhān and Māh Dīnār, called together al-Māhān, "the two māhs", i.e. districts, which were given *āmān* at the time of the conquest (see his version), including the recognition of their religious rights and the duty to pay the *jizya*, see Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, II, 24ff.: Ziyād moves against Mu'āwiya via Bihzādhān (!) to the Hulwān road, and from there to Madā'in, and obviously, this connection shows that it should be: Bihrādhān. Baradān is in later times considered to be a part of Baghdad's hinterland, with a more pleasant climate; Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, 941: Shabīb fled there from the heat for three months; III, 354: al-Manṣūr stays in Baradān; III, 494; al-Mahdī stays in Baradān during the summer. The family of the Baradānīs, mentioned above, probably originated from that region, which was east or northeast of Baghdad.

Mas'ūd was appointed governor "in Madā'in and *ard jūkhā*" and a permanent force was stationed in Madā'in to enforce security in Jūkhā and al-Anbār.

Daskarat al-Malik, the Persian Dastajird, was on the Dī'āla. This was an important and flourishing city at the time of the first Abbasids, and the first station on the Khurāsān route after Nahrwān. About eight parasangs (about 50 kilometers) to the south was 'Ukbarā (Buzurj Sābūr), on the eastern side of the Tigris (whose flow later moved sharply to the east), an important junction on the river (above, sec. 288).

Nahrwān, mentioned in Nathan the Babylonian's story, was one of this district's main cities. Ba'qūbā (also: Bā'aqūbā, Bāqūbā) was on the Nahrwān canal, 10 parasangs (about 60 kilometers) from Baghdad. As its name shows (it had certainly originally been: Bē 'Uqbā, or Bē Ya'qūba), it was founded well before the Muslim conquest. It is where the great canal, called Tammarā, began. Kalwādhā, according to Ṭabarī, was both a town and a district "in the area between Madā'in and Jūkhā". Sources dealing with the period of the conquest (Ṭabarī and others) note that Kalwādhā was then populated by "the children of the crucifiers", i.e., Jews, as I have noted (above, sec. 54). Baghdad's east gate was called Bāb Kalwādhā. In the year 900, Kalwādhā was the base of the Qarmaṭis, under Ḥamdān Qarmaṭ.

Kalwādhā, as well as the eastern part of the city of Baghdad, were, therefore, situated at the very heart of what in an earlier period was the district of Rādhān. It may be assumed, that the earliest Jewish inhabitants of Baghdad, after its founding in 762, came from Rādhān. Even though the name Rādhān itself is not mentioned in Jewish sources, there is no doubt that already in ancient times a large Jewish population lived in this district, i.e., Rādhān, or Jūkhā, or *sawād* Baghdad. The people of Rādhān were at the head of the Pumbedita yeshiva for at least 10 years, towards the end of the eighth century: 788-798. In Sel. 1099 (AD 787/8) the gaonate began of "our Lord and Master Menashe son of our Lord and Master Joseph", about whom it was said: "he was a Gūkha'ā, from among the people of Bē 'Uqbā" (which, as we have seen, is Ba'qūbā). His gaonate lasted until Sel. 1107 (795/6), when he was succeeded by our Lord and Master Isaiah ha-Levi son of our Lord and Master Abbā, "who was from Kalwādhā, a town close to Baghdad".

When examining and interpreting the statements of Ibn Khurdādhbih, it should be borne in mind that the Jews of Babylonia and Persia in that period, which lasted during the first three centuries of Islam, constituted the greatest concentration of all of the Jewish diasporas and it is among them that the main spiritual center of Judaism was located. A certain part of the merchants' class among these Jews (and not the Jews of Southern France!) held a central position in the international trade of that period—this is what Ibn Khurdādhbih adds to our information about the history of the period and about its Jews. Their multifaceted economic activities and the routes of these Jewish merchants, and their ties with the Jewish centers scattered along their routes, were parallel to the strong spiritual and communal ties between the Babylonian center and the diaspora communities. These merchants were called Rādhānites because the greatest concentration of Jews in the east of Babylonia, on the Persian border, had been from long away days, before Islam, around Māhōzē and the towns to the east of the Tigris;

in the Muslim period Baghdad was the main center of this area; then these Jews were still called Rādhānites, or—in the language of Sherira Gaon—Gūkhāites.

As for the Pirenne thesis, that I mentioned at the outset of this discussion, we have seen that it should be taken with a grain of salt. The commercial ties between the parts of the world that were eventually under Muslim rule, and those which remained under Christian rule continued as before. There are those who sought to see things through Pirenne's eyes: the ties were severed to such an extent that only the Jews were able to maintain the trade between the Islamic countries and Europe. Yet this is an undoubtedly farfetched way of looking at things; the Jews had a central function in international trade before Islamic rule, and they continued to play that role under Islam as well.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁴ See a survey, quite a superficial one, of the localities to the east of the Tigris, in Adams, *Lands*, 84-111; Ḥudhayfa: Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 37f., 48; Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 152; Ibn al-Athīr, *Uṣd al-ghāba*, I, 392; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, II, 220; Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 163; *idem*, *Fuṭūḥ*, 209; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, I, 2637; Iṣḥāq b. Maṣ'ūd: *ibid.*, II, 635 (AH 66, AD 685); the garrison: *ibid.*, II, 899, 980; cf. El-Ali, *Mesopotamia*, 3-4 (1968/9), 419. Daskarat al-Malik: Ibn Ḥawqal, 246; Sarre u. Herzfeld, *Reise*, I, 59 n. 2; II, 76ff.; Nöldeke, *Geschichte*, 295 n. 1; Le Strange, *Lands*, 62; Canard, *Transl. of al-Sūli*, 151 n. 1. 'Ukkarā: see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 17, 1690; Ibn Serapion, 38f.; Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, 77 n. 704; Adams, *Lands*, 90; Qirīsānī, *Anwār*, 13; Nahrwān: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 85: "Nahrwān and all its suburbs", which were under the authority of the exilarch. See also TS 13 J 23, f. 9, in Mann, *Jews*, II, 115, a letter to Abraham b. Haggai, where there is the signature of Ya'ish b. Sahl al-Nahrwānī al-Hazzān. Ba'qūbā, see Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 472; Le Strange, *Lands*, 59; according to Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, II, 265, it was called by people: Bā Ya'qūbā; Adams, *Lands*, 94; Kalwādihā: Ibn Khurdādhbih, 12; Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, II 901; Ibn Ṭiṭṭaqā, al-Fakhri, 454; Sarre u. Herzfeld, *Reise*, II, 105; Le Strange, *Lands*, 31; Ivanow, *Ism. Trad.*, 48; Steinschneider, *Jeschurun*, 6(1868), 28ff., tried to discover Rādhānites in a fragment of the commentary of *Sefer ha-yeṣirā* by Dūnash b. Tamīm, edited by Munk, *JA*, 4^e sér., t. 16 (1850), 21 n. 1. In it, there are praises of using Arabic for a better understanding of Hebrew "since the Hebrew is purified Arabic and there are things in Arabic named as in their Hebrew names"; and further: "this principle we learned from the Benē ha-Danī who arrived here from Palestine". Steinschneider assumed that a *rēsh* there was miswritten, and that it should be Benē Radānī. However, in the Parma manuscript of this commentary, edited by Mann, *Texts*, I, 74 n. 25, the version is "until Abū Dānī and David he-ḥārāsh (probably: the goldsmith), from the city of Fās, arrived here with this book" (i.e., *Sefer yeṣirā*). Pumbedita: Sherira, *Letter*, 105, 109; see Ginzberg's conclusion, who says about *we-gukhā'a* of Sherira's text, that it is "unintelligible; probably the passage is corrupt", see his *Geon.*, I, 40 n. 1. See general comments on the connection between the centers of learning and leadership in Babylonia and the share of the Jews in international trade: Goitein, in *Divrē ha-kinnūs* (5), vol. II, 101ff.; see Kramers, in *The Legacy* (ed. Arnold), 102; he is the one who formulated the conclusion that only the Jews were able to trade between the two parts of the world after the Muslim conquests, and (probably) in his footsteps, similar comments were made by Ashtor, *Rev. suisse d'hist.*, 27 (1977), 248ff. Goitein, *Diogenes*, 59 (1967), 53, stressed the fact, deduced from the Geniza documents, that it was Jews from the Muslim part of the world who acted in international trade in the Mediterranean basin, which refers to a period that is 200 years later than that of Ibn Khurdādhbih. (It seems to me that his view, that all merchants called *rūm*, i.e. those coming to Egypt and other Muslim countries from Christian lands were Christian, is too far-fetched; it appears that among those *rūm* arriving from Europe [both its west and its east]—for instance, Constantinople—there were many Jewish merchants as well.)

2. *Babylonian financiers*

(355) The Jewish financiers constituted an important stratum of tenth century Iraqi Jewry. They were coinage experts, knowing how to set the metallic composition of coins and evaluate their worth relative to other coins. From the standpoint of numbers, they did not have great weight in the Jewish population, and for those periods where we have real information about them it appears that they only numbered few families. We have real information mainly about the Jewish financiers active in the second half of the ninth century and the first half of the tenth century. Their center of activities was Baghdad, but they operated in other areas of Iraq as well. Modern students tend to call them the Jewish bankers, yet anyone who thinks that there was any great similarity between the conditions and workings of this activity and the methods of modern bankers would be mistaken. However, these two types of financiers have a common peculiarity that is not lessened by the distance of the many generations separating them, dealing with money, of course, collecting money, payments, monetary exchange and granting credit. These financiers, whom I will be discussing, had undoubtedly impressed themselves upon the Islamic history writers, for here they deviated from their unfortunate custom of not mentioning whomever belonged to the protected people, in the events they reported. There is no doubt that the impressive scope of their wealth and their activities, as well as their involvement in the financial affairs of the Muslim state, and as a matter of course in the central events in the arenas of internal policy and the power struggles that took place in Baghdad in those days, are what caused the chroniclers to deviate. Their involvement and their status among the Jewish public caused their name to be remembered in a number of those few Jewish historical sources that we have at our disposal from that period.

In an article he published in 1931, Massignon, the French orientalist, sought to prove that in the Abbasid period one may locate the roots of an international banking system where, as is known, the Jews had a great influence also in later generations. Since he was not, apparently, a great lover of the Jews, Massignon made immense efforts to stress the unique connection between the monetary dealings of those Jews and the negative aspects of the affairs of the Muslim state, especially slave trafficking and robbing Mecca pilgrims, even though the contemporary documents show not even a shred of any such connection. On the other hand, his work was a first attempt to concentrate all the information in the Arabic sources about the Jewish financiers and describe the different facets of their activity: receiving deposits, such as the deposits of the vizier, who received monies via the *diwān al-muṣāḍarāt*, i.e., the office in charge of expropriations, the deposits of merchants, as well as loans to the authorities in exchange for tax collection rights. These financiers would bring in other Jews to act as guarantors for large sums, which, according to Massignon, were invested, as stated, mainly in military expeditions to capture slaves in Africa, in large-scale speculation, in organizing regular caravans between cities through deserts, in maritime expeditions and trade (according to him: with the Rādhānites). These Jews had great income from money changing, because the relationship between the values of the two metals, gold and silver, was not

set, and fluctuated between 1:10 to 1:25; according to him, silver was used more in the East, and gold more in the West (areas that had belonged to the erstwhile Byzantium). Further along he adds and describes how the center of this activity passed from Baghdad westwards—to Cairo, Cordova, and then (in the twelfth century) to the Christian countries. The viziers were interested in depositing their money with these Jews, because they would pocket half the profit received from the use of the invested monies. The trust the Muslim regime had for them may also be explained by the fact that there was no reason to suspect them of cooperating with one of the Christian countries.

Monetary dealings apparently developed from the specialization in the goldsmith trade, i.e., working with precious metals; the goldsmith trade was a definite Jewish vocation, and it appears that the Jews dominated this economic branch; from here it was but a small step to money changing, which required, as already stated, expertise in metals, and from there to widespread dealings in money and credit. The severe Muslim interdiction regarding receiving interest is what led, to a certain extent, to Jewish specialization in this field, even though Jāhīz had already written (first half of the ninth century) that actually Muslims (the non-Arabs among them) were those who dealt with interest, in the disguise of conditional sales. On the other hand, in the geonic responsa there are reservations regarding accepting interest from Muslims, such as: "accepting interest from a gentile is permitted, but from gentiles that are permitted to give or take interest; but with regard to these Ishmaelites whose religion forbids it, one is forbidden from taking interest, and it should certainly not be done by a scholar, for there is something desecrating involved". However, we find no avoidance regarding interest and huge profits made by the Jewish financiers with whom we are dealing. Coin minting was also a definite Jewish occupation. Dirhams minted by ʿUbaydallah b. Ziyād in AH 56, AD 675, in Baṣra, have a Hebrew inscription (above, sec. 176). Al-Ḥajjāj Ibn Yūsuf placed a Jew by the name of Sumayr in charge of one of the first Muslim mints, which was in Wāsiṭ. It was said of the members of a Jewish family in Baghdad that only they knew the secret of manufacturing zinc sheets (*al-raṣāṣ al-abyaḍ*—white lead) and the gold leaves, known as "gold waters". These Jews zealously guarded their secret and taught it to no one outside their circle; it was one of the wonders of the world and high point in chemistry (*akbar al-kimiyā*); Hamadānī mentions the use of those leaves, among other things, also in bookbinding and in adhesive glazing. Already in the pre-Islamic period, there were Jews in al-Madīna who worked in the goldsmith trade; these were the Banū Qaynuqāʾ, whom the Prophet expelled from al-Madīna. Jews whose craft was in the goldsmith trade (*al-ṣiyāgha*) are mentioned in the Geniza documents: Joseph and ʿAṭīyya the sons of Jacob b. ʿAzriel Ṣāʾigh, Ibrahīm b. Maṣṣūr al-Ṣāʾigh, Joseph b. al-Ṣāʾigh, and many others. According to al-Muqaddasī, writing towards the end of the tenth century, most of the financiers in al-Shām (i.e., in Syria and Palestine) were Jews. It was said of the Alexandrines (apparently at the end of the tenth century), that they had no choice but to go to the Jews for goldsmith needs. The craft of the *ḡarrāb* was considered as exclusively Jewish in folk stories: when Ibn Fawrak turned to the Ḥanbalis in Baghdad, seeking to prove to them that the angel (not God, Himself) created the world (even

though in the language of the Qur'ān it is God who created it), he asks them what they had to say about the coins minted by a certain Jew the *ḍarrāb*, was it the Jew who minted them, or was it the caliph; of course, they all answered, it was the caliph, and in this roundabout way we learn about Jewish exclusivity in this craft.³⁵⁵

(356) The term the sources of the period often use to note these financiers (usually, Jews or Christians) is *jahbadh* (plural: *jahābidha*). It appears to be a Persian loan-word. Fischel devoted a special discussion to this term and its meaning, in his study of Medieval Jewish economic life—a study based on Arabic sources. Following him, they may be described as experts in monetary transactions; it may be assumed that these were money changers who reached a status and function similar to those of a modern banker. One of the main needs they were required to fill, and whose fulfillment was the basis of their activity and economic status, was finding a common denominator for the many and different kinds of coins in circulation. A special tax was levied on coin exchange, *māl al-jahbadh*, which was an exchange fee, also known as *jahbadha*. There was also a special government office in Baghdad, set up in 928, the *dīwān al-jahbadha*. Cahen dealt with the function of the *jahbadh*, based on an arithmetic textbook composed in the mid-eleventh century, especially finding there details of his function in the area of taxes. The supplementary payment on land tax (the *kharāj*) was intended for the *jahbadh*, because he would lend money to tax-payers and receive the interest in the form of that supplement; however, Cahen emphasizes that the *jahbadh* should not be seen as a tax collector. The actual collecting was carried out by an assessment official, called a *kātib al-rūznāmah*, i.e., a daybook recorder, and it should be understood that he would organize the list of tax-payers and record the assessment and its collection, and operate under the supervision of the local governor (the *ʿāmil*). From the collectors the taxes arrived at the *jahbadh*, who would then transmit them to the central authority after deducting his percentage. In Egypt the *jahbadh* became a kind of accountant for the treasury. According to another Arabic source, the *jahbadh* was the *wazzān*, i.e., the one who

³⁵⁵ See the Arabic sources gathered for the first time by Mez, *Renaissance*, 450; see Massignon, *BEQ*, 1 (1931), 3; on p. 6 he translates *muṣādarāt*: *récupérations* (retrieving). He was answered by Cohen, *MGWJ*, 79 (1925), 361, in a rather apologetic article which was not based on personal study of the Arabic sources. See also Fischel, *Jews*, 14ff.; on the importance of credit and partnerships for obtaining it, not only for consumption but for production as well, see Udovitch, *JAOs*, 87 (1967), 260. See Groner, *Asufot*, 2 (1987/8), 76, who edited part of TS G 2.76, and see the responsum of ʿAmram Gaon b. Sheshnā, *Shaʿarē ṣ*, part 4, ch. ii, no. 20, where there is an interdiction against charging high interest on a loan to a non-Jew, and a total interdiction of charging interest on loans to scholars. (I thank Prof. M.A. Friedman for drawing my attention to this subject, on which he has more sources.) Jāhiz on money-lenders: see Pellat, *Le milieu basrien*, 234; and see *ibid.*, 238, on the Baṣra dirhams. Sumayr: see Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IV, 416; cf. Gil, *Hist.*, 109f.; “gold water” see al-Hamadānī, *al-Jawharatayn*, 297, who describes the way these leaves are packed as well; cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, II, 583, n. 27, who interprets the text a little differently. Banū Qaynuqāʾ, see any book on Islam’s early history; ʿAzriel al-Šāʿigh: Ginzberg, *Ginzē S.*, II, 186 (TS Loan 154, l. 17); Ibrahīm b. Maṣṣūr: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 71 (no. 42); Muqaddasī, *Aqālim*, 35f. People of Alexandria: Wanšārīšī, in *Archives marocaines*, 13 (1908), 30f. The *ḍarrāb*: Ibn al-Bannāʾ, in *BSOAS*, 19 (1957), 291. In the first half of the thirteenth century the head of the mint in Baghdad was a Jew: Shams al-dīn b. Barāta *nāẓir dār al-darb*, see the *Dīwān* of Eleazar b. Jacob ha-Bavli, no. 206; cf. Poznanski, *Bab. Geon.*, 46.

weighed (the coins from the tax payments) for the *dīwān*, and he was required to record each deficiency and each improper coin; he would bind the pouches of coins, and the (governor's) supervisor would, along with him, seal the pouches and write the receipts for the tax-payers. According to Hilāl al-Šābi', there was a special status of *jahbadhs*, the *jahbadhs* of the court. The Abbasid caliphs in the tenth century could not administer their money affairs without the help of these *jahbadhs*, who were, as stated above, Jews or Christians; in an order issued by al-Muqtadir, in 909, forbidding the employment of Jews and Christians in public posts, he explicitly states: except for the *jahbadhs* (as well as physicians). According to Ibn al-Mammāṭī, writing about the affairs of the government in Egypt (towards the end of the twelfth century), the *jahbadh* was the official who recorded the tax collection, wrote the receipts for them, dealt with arranging the daybooks and the seals, and transferred the moneys in accordance with his records. Grohmann writes about a papyrus where, according to him, there was the earliest mention of the *jahbadh*; mentioned there is the *jahbadh* of the Fayyūm region, Sahl b. Da'ūd (so in Grohmann) a name which may suit both a Jew and a Christian. Maqrīzī, writing about the agricultural activities in the month of *Bashnas* (26 April-25 May), notes that the farmer would then be required to pay the various taxes for his plot, including the payments for the *jahbadha*, meaning, apparently, the interest for the *jahbadh* in the form of part of the tax, after having lent the money to the farmer. The *jahbadha* payments are also mentioned in the geonic sources, in one of the responsa in the collection *sha'arē sedeq: šarf wa-jahbadha*, the exchange fee and the payment for the *jahbadh*; a similar version is in the geonic responsa published by Harkavy, and also in the Geniza documents. Yahyā al-Jahbadh b. Sharaf was one of the carriers of a letter of the Palestinian gaon, Daniel b. 'Azariah, from Jerusalem to Fustat, at about 1055.

It is thus possible to see that the *jahbadh* engaged in a variety of multifaceted activities, thus expanding the meaning that may be ascribed to the term itself, ranging between the widest interpretation of a financier dealing with all financial issues and with each person, and the restricted interpretation, whereby the *jahbadh* was a kind of middle status—between the tax payer and the government. In the Judeo-Arabic of the Geniza writings, this term may indeed be found, as we have seen, but unlike in Iraq of the ninth and the tenth centuries, the term more often employed was *šayrafi*, the equivalent of the Hebrew *shulḥānī*.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶ In his study, which contains an interesting analysis of the state's economic matters under the Abbasids, published in 1887, Kremer already paid attention to the functions of the *jahbadh*; in his opinion this was a sort of cashier, the main role was to arrange the account in a way that would be favorable to the treasury; see his *Einnahmebudget*, 8 n. 2. See Cahen, *AIEO*, 10 (1952), 354ff.; Fischel, *Jews*, 12ff.; and see their references. See Hilāl al-Šābi', *Wuzarā'* (Amedroz), 158f.; al-Muqtadir: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS BL Or 4619, 41b; also: Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *Nujūm*, under AH 296; cf. Fischel, *ibid.*, 7; Ibn Mammāṭī, 304; and Grohmann, *ArO*, 6 (1934), 135f.; 9 (1937), 251; Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, II, 18; see the *fatwā* of al-Māzarī (1061-1141), a Sicilian who lived in al-Mahdiyya, ed. Talbī, *Anawati and Gardet Pres. Vol.*, 307ff.; the subject there is *ḥawāla 'alā l-šayrifa*; the businessmen, such as *kattānūn*, *qaṭṭānūn*, *zayyātūn* (dealers in flax, cotton, oil) hand over the money to money changers in dirhams, and they confirm it in dinars, whereas the merchants endorse it (*ḥawāla*), to be paid by the money changers to the bearers, those from whom they bought

(357) One must credit the financiers in this period with having developed and distributed the system of payment without having to resort to coins, but through a money order, known in the Arabic of the period as *suftaja* (from the Persian: *suftača*), and in the Hebrew of that period, as the term found in the rabbinical literature—*diyōqnē*. This use was prominent especially from the Abbasid period, when the caliphate was still unified and enjoyed considerable economic prosperity, until about the mid-tenth century. The use of money orders was common among the Jewish financiers and merchants, and the money order constituted an halachic issue which preoccupied the geonim. This is how the gaon Samuel b. Hophni describes it: "the way of (dealing with) a *hamḥā'ā* (money order) is: the one who gives it (Reuben) has money with Simeon and says to him: give so-and-so from what I have with you. If he said it in the presence of (all) three, it is valid".

In another fragment from the same gaon, from his *kitāb aḥkām* (laws of) *al-qinyān*, (transfer of ownership) he lists the absence of the *ḥawāla* (endorsement) as one of the reasons for negating the validity of the transfer, meaning, that if the act of purchase was via a money order made out to the order of the buyer (and endorsed by him), then he must record the *ḥawāla*. In the first instance, the discussion derives from the Babylonian Talmud, *Giṭṭin* 13b; as for the second—from *Qiddūshin* 22b. The talmudic *halākhā* does indeed explicitly forbid sending money by money order ("money is not to be sent by a *diyōqnē*"—*Bāvā qammā* 104b), but the geonim were forced to accept the economic reality of their time, as explicitly stated in a geonic responsum: "regarding your query about money orders, on their legal status; if Reuben wrote a money order for Simeon, from one city to the other, and Simeon brought it to Levi who took it from him and then denied it.... this is what we think: the gist of the *halākhā* is that one does not send a money order, as our masters have taught.... however, after seeing that this is what the people do, we began accepting it as legal so as not to harm the people's trade". The author of the *haggā'ot maymōniyot*, Meir ha-Kohen of Rothenburg, knew (in the second half of the thirteenth century) that these statements should be ascribed to Hayy Gaon, and after him, to Isaac al-Fāsī. Commercial letters of the eleventh century merchants, contain many details about the use of money orders. In the letter of an

their merchandise, utilizing the document of the money changer as if it were money. However, most sellers hesitate in this matter, since they are poor and suspicious. Ibn Hubayra, 50a (*bāb al-ḥawāla*): the experts in law agree that the *ḥawāla* is permitted, but they diverge regarding the conditions, especially of whether the beneficiary (*al-muḥāl 'alayhi*) has agreed to it. See *Shā'are š.*, nos. 96, 97; Harkavy, *Resp.*, 274 (no. 552): *al-ṣarf wa'l-jahbadha*; also in Geniza documents: Yahyā *al-jahbadh*, see Gil, *Palest.*, II, 675 (no. 362b); see also Busse, *Chalif*, 482. *Jahbadh*, *jahbadha*, are mentioned in the letters of Nehorai and his circle, such as Nehorai writing that he already received the signature of the *jahbadh*: 253, a; there is mention of the *jahbadh* in *dār al-kattān* ("the flax house"), the center of the flax commerce in Alexandria; see the letter of Nissim b. Halfōn, from Tinnis, 587, a. See more references to this topic: Dietrich, *Ar. Briefe*, 84, 87; Canard, in his translation of al-Šūfi, n. 37; see Maqrīzī, *Itt'āz*, I, 132 (AH 362): in December 972, three years after he conquered Egypt, the Fatimid commander Jawhar had in mind to set fire to the market square of the money changers (*al-ṣyārifa*) in Fustat, but he gave up the idea, since it was close to the *jāmi'*, the central mosque; however, he gave orders that the Jews wear discriminating patches. The proximity between the two facts may make us suppose, with Mez, 449, that many of the money changers in Fustat were Jews.

anonymous merchant (b. Solomon) to the Tustari brothers, written about 1011, there is mention of money orders issued in Baghdad against monies deposited there with an anonymous person, by Solomon b. Aaron. These money orders were honored in Damascus, Halab, and also in Egypt.³⁵⁷

(358) In Arabic treatises, information about Jewish financiers begins at about the last quarter of the ninth century. This was a particularly difficult period for the caliphate, a time when Egypt, under the Ṭulūnids, began to breakaway, when a local dynasty began to rule in the Persian area, while in Iraq itself, the Zangī revolt was taking place. It was not Caliph al-Muṭamid, who was ruling, but his brother, Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq, and with him, the vizier, °Ubaydallah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān. Only in 833, did al-Muwaffaq succeed in quelling the Zangī revolt, after they had succeeded in wreaking destruction in central Iraq, in Wāsiṭ, and further eastwards, in Ahwāz. Al-Muwaffaq died in 891, and Caliph al-Muṭamid was forced to recognize his son, al-Muṭtaḍid, as the inheritor of the caliphate throne, and the latter indeed became caliph when his uncle died in October 892.

Al-Muṭtaḍid was one of the most outstanding Abbasid caliphs, showing great talent in directing the military campaigns even before becoming caliph; he also displayed understanding and administrative skill in regards to internal and financial management, despite the difficulties besetting the caliphate externally and from within (incessant struggles in the West, battles against the Ṭulūnid rulers of Egypt, a constant war in Khurāsān and in other Persian areas). Below I present material about him that was preserved in the Arabic sources, which serve to better our understanding of the information regarding the Jewish financiers.

To al-Muṭtaḍid considerable alleviations in the tax burden are ascribed; we find this initially in his contemporaries, al-Ṭabarī and al-Masʿūdī. The tax payment was actually deferred for about two-three months, from Nayrūz (21 March), to 11 June; this took place in AH 282 (which began on 2 March 895). We shall see, however, that there was also a real cancellation of taxes; we have information that al-Muṭtaḍid cancelled the tolls on merchandise (*mukūs*) in Mecca and al-Madīna. One story reiterated in the Arabic sources pertains to his unique dreams. Such a story is first furnished by al-Masʿūdī. According to him, the caliph, in his dream, saw a man

³⁵⁷ See the discussion on the means of payment, the *suftaja*, in Fischel, *Jews*, 17ff.; *suftača* see 127, a, l. 17; b, ll. 3, 8, 20. Samuel b. Hophni, a fragment from the "book of gifts", in Assaf, *Mi-sifrut ha-g.*, 12; a fragment from *aḥkām al-qinyān*, in Abramson, *Tarbiz*, 18 (1946/7), 37, from Bodl MS Heb d 54, f. 44; Abramson, *ibid.*, 39, and see also: 37 n. 18, translates *hawāla* as: 'a check'. The gaon's responsum: Harkavy, *Resp.*, 216 (no. 423), and see also *Ōsar ha-g. to Bāvā qammā* 104a, nos. 259f. (n. 80), and see *ibid.*, a citation from an ancient version of the author of the *Meivōt*: "R. Yoḥānān said: if the witnesses signed an *asimōn*, one may send money by *diyōqnē*". Apparently the term *asimōn* meant here a drawing divided into two parts, with each party retaining one part. As to the word *diyōqnē*, there have been various attempts to interpret it, see the *Mordekhai ad locum*, no. 126, which has several interpretations; it seems to me that one should understand it with the aid of Syriac Aramaic, see in Payne-Smith, *Syriac Dict.*, s.v. *yqn*, explained as "to stamp, to imprint a likeness on a coin". Therefore, *diyōqnē* should be understood as a payment order marked with a distinguishing drawing and signature. The root *yqn* is found to have a similar meaning in Arabic as well. *Diyoqnē* seems to be a plural. Meir ha-Kohen, in *Haggā'ot maym. to hilekhōt shelūḥin we-shut.*, i, 8; see Mamonides, *ibid.*, who limits this matter to the relations between a lender and a borrower. See also al-Fāsi (Rif) to BT *Bāvā qammā*, 37b. The Baghdadian payment orders: 127.

whose appearance was continuously changing, one time he appeared as a monk, once as a handsome young man, another time as an old man with a hoary beard, and another as clutching a sword in his hand, which he used to kill one of the caliph's servants; the end of the story is that in the wake of the interpretations of his dream, al-Mu'taḍid ordered that many of his slaves and maidservants be killed, and he threw many others into jail. In another dream ascribed to him, an old man appeared to inform him that one of the Tigris sailors had committed a crime—murdering a woman and robbing her property. As it happened, this had actually occurred, the criminal was apprehended and executed. Further down it appears that these legendary accounts had an influence on the Jewish story regarding Neḫīrā. Mārī b. Sulaymān wrote interesting things about al-Mu'taḍid's attitude towards the protected people. After a group of Muslims wrote him a letter complaining about his vizier, ʿAbdallah (correct name: ʿUbaydalla) b. Sulaymān, al-Mu'taḍid showed him the complaint. He blushed and apologized, saying that the only Christian whom he had employed (in a government post) was ʿUmar Ibn Yūsuf, appointed (governor) of al-Anbār, aside from which he also employed the *jahbadhs*, who were Jews and Zoroastrians, and they were only in his employ because he trusted them, not because of a leaning towards their religions. Then al-Mu'taḍid told him to give preference to a Christian, if he is gifted, over a Jew. The Christian, he believed, was more loyal, because the Jews still had hopes of having a state again; he was even more loyal than the Muslims, who are "people of our religion", but precisely because of this, he told the vizier, the Muslims plot to take over your position. The Christian is also more loyal than the Zoroastrian, for, after all, the latter had once had this country. As a matter of fact, as it transpires, the caliphs and the viziers actually preferred the Jews, for with them there was no suspicion of any concealed ties to the Christian countries.

Al-Mu'taḍid was undoubtedly unusual among the Abbasid caliphs when the caliphate was gradually losing its strength and unity. He tried to stop the deterioration and solve the difficult financial problems. In Baghdad itself, different religious streams were at loggerheads: on the one hand, the adherents of Ibn Ḥanbal adopted an extreme anti-Shiite line and lauded the Umayyads, ʿUthmān and Mu'āwiya; on the other hand there was a strong Shiite opposition that was responsible for the murder of Caliph al-Mutawakkil (December 861). In al-Mu'taḍid's time the Shiites were more moderate, and he appointed Shiite figures, or those with Shiite leanings, to public posts. There also was a strong Christian influence. Al-Mu'taḍid adopted a moderate policy, trying to grant advantages to each one of the groups, and also seeking to win over the peasants when adjusting, as mentioned, the tax payment to their needs (the payment in June, after the harvest); on the other hand, however, he increased the taxes on the great estates and the *iqṭāʿāt*—referring to the tax concessionaires in the military elite.

Al-Mu'taḍid administered the caliphate for about 10 years, until his death in 902. His son, al-Muktafī, born of a Turkish maidservant, succeeded him, when called to Baghdad from Raqqa, where he was serving as governor. He sought to remove himself from the severe, even cruel, ruling methods of his predecessors; he was successful in the battles he waged

against the Qarmaṭīs, and under him Egypt returned to the rule of Baghdad. He died in August 908, and the caliphate was passed on to his younger brother (then 13), al-Muqtadir, who ruled for 25 years. The latter's government was rife with corruption, with failures and deterioration in all areas. The Ḥamdānids, rulers in Mosul, became independent to all intents and purposes, the Byzantines carried out repeated attacks on the northern areas of the caliphate, and Baghdad's hold over Egypt weakened. Baghdad was rife with rebellions and riots, and the Qarmaṭīs carried on incessant battles against the caliphate armies. Al-Muqtadir was killed by soldiers on 31 October 932, after seeking to fire their commander, Mu'nis.

Al-Muqtadir is not highly considered in the sources; said of him is that he was of weak character, immature, given to moods, a glutton and indolent. As for the protected people, most known is his order (mentioned above) regarding the ban on their employ in public posts, except in the *jahbadha* and medicine, and his order on the dress code (the requirement to wear honey-colored clothes and with colored patches on the back).³⁵⁸

(359) The viziers have a central role in this period, when the events connected to the Jewish financiers took place. The viziers stemmed from the administrative intelligentsia of the caliphate, the scribes who wrote the ruler's documents and letters, also kept the monetary records and who were in charge of expenses. This was the stratum of the *kuttāb*, the scribes, or officials (singular: *kātib*). We find the term *wazīr*, also in the sense of armor-bearers, or financial managers, of the senior military officers, or of local governors. The vizier of the caliphate was, of course, the right-hand man of the caliph, and directly administered the daily affairs of the caliphate. This post became most institutionalized in the Baghdad caliphate, that of the Abbasids, in contradistinction to its predecessor, the Damascene. The phenomenon is connected to the fundamental change generated by the Abbasid revolution, whose governing and administrative elite was totally different from that of the Umayyads. The Umayyads' main support came from the Arab tribes, while under the Abbasids the power of the non-Arab Muslims, the Persians and others, grew. The models of the pre-Islamic Persian administration were most influential in the Abbasid regime.

The viziers were those who maintained the contact with the *jahbadhs*, deposited their funds with them, received credit from them, and handled the

³⁵⁸ Easing the taxes: Tabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 2143; Mas'ūdī, *Murāj*, VIII 205. Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 469; Yāfi'ī (MS Paris 1593), 94a, ascribes to al-Mu'taḍid even an abolition of the tax on inheritances; *idem*, *Mir'āh*, II, 198, explains "the abolition of the Nayrūz" by al-Mu'taḍid's wish to liquidate the custom of the *Majūs*, the Zoroastrians. Abolition of the *mukūs*: Ibn Zāfir, *Akhbār*, MS BL Or 3685, 133a; the dreams: Mas'ūdī, *ibid.*, 181f, the crimes: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī (above, n. 336), fol. 23, and also, in a different version, Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XI, 88. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *ibid.*, 25a, ascribes to him the intention of banishing all inhabitants from *bāb al-shammāsiyya*, and of wanting to destroy their houses and shops in order to build a palace there. Mārī b. Sulaymān, *Majdal*, 84. See a general discussion on al-Mu'taḍid: Sourdel, *SI*, 13 (1960), 5-19; al-Mu'taḍid ordered Mu'āwiya cursed from the *minbars* of the mosques; but he forbade speeches and gatherings in the central mosques; he wrote a book full of imprecations (apparently against the Ḥanbalīs), but the *qāḍī* Yūsuf b. Ya'qūb dissuaded him from circulating it; see Yāfi'ī, *ibid.*, 202, under AH 284, which is 897. On his cruelty: see Bowen, *Life*, 25f.; al-Muqtadir, see: Massignon, *La passion*, 445. The restrictive orders: Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *Nujūm*, III, 165; Ibn Kathīr, *ibid.*, 108; Fiey, *Chrétien* (1980), 127f.; in his day the great decline began: Ḥamza, *Ta'rikh*, 201f.; see Heilman's dissertation, pp. 20ff.

tax cash flow with their help. In order to better understand the course of events, we should look at the list of the viziers and the dates of their appointment:

Under al-Mu^ctamid:

°Ubaydallah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān, June 870

Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad, August 877

Sulaymān b. Wahb, September 877

Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad (2), July 878

Sulaymān b. Wahb (2), August 878

Isma^cʿīl b. Bulbul, 878/9

Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad (3), July 878/9

Isma^cʿīl b. Bulbul (2), 878/9 (was executed)

Sā^cid b. Makhlad, February 879

°Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān, June 891

Under al-Mu^ctaḍid:

°Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān (continued in his post)

Al-Qāsim b. °Ubaydallah, April 901

Under al-Muqtafī:

Al-Qāsim b. °Ubaydallah (continued in his post)

Al-°Abbās b. al-Ḥasan, October 904

Under al-Muqtadir:

Al-°Abbās b. al-Ḥasan (continued in his post)

°Alī Ibn al-Furāt, 19 Decemeber 908

Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān, 23 July 912

°Alī Ibn °Isā, 1 August 913

°Alī Ibn al-Furāt (2), 3 June 917

Hāmid Ibn al-°Abbās, 11 November 918

°Alī Ibn al-Furāt (3), 7 August 923 (was executed)

°Abdallah b. Muḥammad Ibn Khāqān, 15 July 924

Aḥmad b. °Ubaydallah al-Khaṣībī, 30 November 925

°Ubaydallah al-Kalwādhānī, 18 January 927

°Alī Ibn °Isā (2), 13 April 927

Ibn Muqla, 8 May 928

Sulaymān b. al-Ḥasan, 17 June 930

°Ubaydallah al-Kalwādhānī (2), 16 August 931

Al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim, 15 October 931

Al-Faḍl b. Ja^cfar Ibn al-Furāt, 9 May 932

In the 62 years included in this list, there were thus 30 vizier appointments, i.e., the average tenure was about two years. Some of them lasted longer in their post: °Ubaydallah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān (seven years), °Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān (ten years), °Alī Ibn al-Furāt (about six years, in three periods), °Alī Ibn °Isā (about five years, in two periods).

Beyond doubt, financial matters played a central role in the vizier's function. We know only about some of these affairs from the sources. We know about °Ubaydallah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān and al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad that they were involved in financial matters, and embezzlings by the governors and those in charge of the tax collection; °Ubaydallah was then vizier,

while al-Ḥasan was in charge of the villages. Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad, before being appointed vizier, served as the business representative of Caliph al-Mustaʿīn. This was in the summer of 862, when a financial deal of hundreds of thousands of dinars was made that was meant to ensure that the new caliph's rule would not be jeopardized by competitors within his own family. Seven years later, in summer 869, ʿUbaydallah was the victim of blackmail, after physical pressure was placed on him, and he was forced to commit himself to paying a huge sum of money; he later sought to shirk it, but in September of that year, he was forced to write a *ruqʿa*, an order to hand over a very precious stone—apparently to one of the *jahbadhs*; it was said of that precious stone that its value was over 30,000 dinars. As to Sulaymān b. Wahb, in 870, we find him involved in dealing with *saḡātij*, money orders. Sāʿid b. Makhlad was, for many years, the chief official of al-Muwaffaq, Caliph al-Muʿtamid's brother; his monetary dealings were expressed by his tight fist when it came to payments for the army, something which led to a revolt of the army cohorts in Baghdad at the beginning of 884. This revolt ended, after bloodshed, when Sāʿid decided to make the payments coming to the soldiers. However, about two years later, towards the end of 885, al-Muwaffaq decided to seize all the property accumulated by Sāʿid and his cronies and had him and his sons, Abū ʿIsā and Abū Ṣāliḥ, who were in Baghdad, as well as his father and his cronies, who were in Samarrā, thrown in prison. ʿUbaydallah b. Sulaymān was the son of the aforementioned Sulaymān b. Wahb, and, as Ṭabarī has noted, part of the immense property confiscated by al-Muwaffaq, was that of this vizier. However, when they came to an agreement over the sum to be paid to the caliph, the father's and son's status was reinstated, and the son was appointed vizier when al-Muʿtamid was still in power, also keeping this post in under al-Muʿtaḍid. Some information about the viziers under al-Muqtadir has been preserved which notes the widespread money expropriations that he carried out. In 909, ʿAlī Ibn al-Furāt seized 100,000 dinars from the *qāḍī* Abū ʿUmar b. Yūsuf. Nonetheless, he was generous with the privilege holders of the Abbasid family and of the ʿAlids family (the ʿAbbāsiyūn and the ʿTālibiyūn) and spent most of the treasury's money on them. Two years later, 911, Caliph al-Muqtadir threw him in jail and seized his entire property. Ibn al-Furāt was then reappointed vizier, becoming involved in the tax collection of the Rayy district (the area of today's Teheran), which was supposed to bring 700,000 dinars a year into the treasury. In 918, he was again dismissed by al-Muqtadir, because he was unable to withstand the army's monetary demands, and his demand that the caliph participate with his private treasury monies (*bayt al-māl al-khāṣṣ*) in the army's expenses to the tune of 200,000 dinars. He and his son, al-Muḥassin, later became the victims of the accepted blackmail procedure, and after undergoing torture paid great sums. In the summer of 923, Ibn al-Furāt became vizier a third time, whereupon he carried out huge confiscations of hundreds of thousands of dinars through torture and beatings to the point of death—all of this under the management of his son, al-Muḥassin, who was “morally corrupt, evil, very bad-hearted, called by the people the repulsive son of the good one (*al-khabīth ibn al-ṭayyib*)”. Finally, in June 924, ʿAlī

Ibn al-Furāt was dismissed and executed, after great property (about a million dinars) of his and his relatives and associates was seized.³⁵⁹

(360) 'Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān is the first of the viziers about whom there is information on ties with the Jewish financiers, whom I shall be discussing. These ties were certainly maintained also earlier, but no information about them has been preserved in the Arabic sources. The information increases regarding the vizier 'Alī Ibn al-Furāt; in the information about him we find the prevalent phenomenon of the considerable bribes that the financiers paid to the holders of the high post. 'Alī Ibn al-Furāt founded (at about 918) a special government office to collect those sums from the rulers' associates and return them to the treasury. This office was called the *diwān al-marāfiq* (office of the hand-outs).

Against the background of the sui generis policy conducted by 'Alī Ibn al-Furāt one must examine his uncommon religious and social identity. As Massignon has shown, 'Alī Ibn al-Furāt belonged to a family with Shiite leanings, of a unique Shiite sect, that of the Nuṣayrīs. Most of the people in the high stratum of officialdom who dealt with the caliphate monies were in this sect, one that actually belonged to the major trend among the Shiites, who believed in 12 imāms, but was part of a sub-trend, the Mukhammasa, who believed in series of five figures in which the Divinity sometimes materializes, beginning with Muḥammad-'Alī-Fāṭima-al-Ḥasan-al-Ḥusayn. The father of 'Alī the vizier, Muḥammad Ibn al-Furāt, was the main supporter of the eleventh *bāb* of the Nuṣayrīs, Muḥammad Ibn Nuṣayr (died in 883), and was a family relative of number 10, 'Umar Ibn al-Furāt, *al-kātib* (official, scribe) *al-baghdādī* (executed about 818). In the time of the vizier 'Alī Ibn al-Furāt, the influence of this sect peaked, and the other ruling groups (especially the Jarrahīs, one of whom was 'Alī Ibn 'Īsā) were subjected to persecutions.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ The affair of al-Musta'in: Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 150; see *Akhbār al-dawla al-'abbāsiyya*, 162, on the instruments of torture used to extract money from the *muṣāḍarīn*, in the days of al-Wāthiq (842-847); apparently al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad first tried to preserve his money, because shortly afterwards Caliph al-Mu'tazz was killed, but in September 869 that *ruq'a* was written, see Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 1722, and he escaped death only thanks to the intervention of Caliph al-Muhtadī, al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad had a special relationship with Aḥmad Ibn Ṭūlūn, who became the ruler of Egypt, and he served him as a kind of advisor; but Ibn Ṭūlūn suspected that he had connections with al-Muwaffaq, the caliph's brother, and was spying on his behalf; he therefore had him sent to Antioch and arranged that he be killed there. See Ibn Ṭiḡtaqā, 343: *ābāhu kāna ma'barānīyan*, and some interpreted this as "his father was Jewish", which is extremely doubtful. See on al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad: Sourdel, *Vizirat*, 313f., and n.12 *ibid.*; Sulaymān b. Wahb: Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, 1790; in that year he was also involved in negotiations, mainly of a financial nature, with the Turkish battalions, see *ibid.*, 1797-1803. The rebellion against Sa'īd: Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, 1903, 2104. It emerges from the sources that he was very involved in matters of the army and its battles. His arrest and the confiscations: Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, 2109f. His palace on the Tigris' bank was renowned in Baghdad; it is there that Qaṭr al-Nadā', daughter of Khumārawayh sojourned before her marriage to al-Mu'tadīd, and it was there that the river boat (the *shadhā*) passed after bringing her to al-Mu'tadīd, see Ṭabarī, *ibid.*, 2145f.; see on Sulaymān b. Wahb also: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, V, 327. 'Alī Ibn al-Furāt and the financial matters: Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid.*, VIII, 17f.; the looting of his properties: *ibid.*, 63ff., 110ff.; the confiscations and his son's part in it: *ibid.*, 142; his end: *ibid.*, 149-155.

³⁶⁰ The *diwān al-marāfiq*: Ibn Miskawayh, I, 41f.; al-Hamadani, *Takmilā*, 31f., 86. See on Ibn al-Furāt also: Bowen, *Life*, 29ff.; see also: Zakī, *al-Muqtabas*, 3 (1908), 425; see Sourdel's view on the relations between Ibn al-Furāt and the Jewish bankers: Sourdel, *Vizirat*, 517; he points out that Ibn al-Furāt was very much interested in their concealed

(361) ʿAlī Ibn ʿIsā, the most prominent of the viziers who filled the post in al-Muqtadir's time, was first in charge of one of the important state offices, the "western *dīwān*", from 899. When he was first appointed vizier, in August 913, ʿAlī Ibn ʿIsā granted significant tax discounts, especially on merchandise, in Mecca and in Fāris (also, apparently, in the other districts) and in the taxes on the peasants; on the other hand he instituted savings in military expenditures. Also credited to him is special concern for public projects, such as hospitals, as well as the orderly collection of debts. The chroniclers praise him for his kindness toward the educated people and the clergy, and while in charge of the "western *dīwān*", he would assemble learned people every evening to dine with him. He even earns praise for his greater knowledge of poetry than anyone else. The economizing policy instituted by ʿAlī Ibn ʿIsā was also accepted by the vizier Ḥamid Ibn al-ʿAbbās; it was said of him that he instituted a comprehensive system of the tax collection from the peasants in the districts of Baghdad, Kūfa, Wāsiṭ, Ahwāz, Iṣfahān; and as we shall see below, we know of the activities of Jewish financiers in some of these districts.³⁶¹

(362) Aside from the viziers, different pressure groups and power centers stemming from the caliphate's high society, with its various trends and sub-trends and sects—all of them, of course, in religious garb, were active in this period. A group deserving special attention, one of whose scions is mentioned regarding the history of the Jewish money changers, is the sons of Abī'l-Baḡhl. The Muslim scholar ʿAbd al-Jabbār, writing in 995, i.e., about two-three generations after the events described here, still knows of this group, who, according to him, are "people from among the secretaries (*al-kuttāb*) and governors appointed by the regime"; "they claim that they belong to the Muslims, to the Shiites among them, even though they lean

services, since it was with them that he kept the funds which he needed in order to make the caliph dependent on him and on his retainers. On ʿAlī Ibn al-Furāt's having belonged to the Nuṣayrī sect, see the articles of Massignon: *Mélanges Demombynes*, 25ff.; *ZDMG*, 93 (1938), 379ff. He describes the special relationship between Ibn al-Furāt and the Jewish money changers as something like the organization of a state bank, based on the house of trade of these Jewish financiers in Ahwāz. In Massignon's opinion, the motivation to seek the help of *dhimmīs*, Jews and Christians, in financing state affairs stemmed from the interdiction on Muslims to trade in gold and silver. See also Heilman's dissertation, 9.

³⁶¹ ʿAlī Ibn ʿIsā is appointed to the 'western' *dīwān*: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VII, 496. His actions in the state's economy: *ibid.*, 68f.; see more on his economic policy, and mainly on the reductions in military expenses: *ibid.*, 164f.; his attitude towards scholars and his knowledge: Yāqūt, *Irshād*, V, 278; Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *Nujūm*, III, 288, and cf. Bowen, *Life*, 70f., who notes, among other things, that there was probably a special relationship between him and the outstanding scholar of those times, the famous writer Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī. In a gathering of scholars convoked by ʿAlī Ibn ʿIsā, the conflict that erupted among the Jews, between the exilarch David b. Zakkai and Saadia Gaon was on the agenda (above, sec. 145). See Masʿūdī, *Tanbīh*, 113, and cf. Bowen, *ibid.*, 78f., who deduced that a Jewish scholar regularly took part in those gatherings. See also Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *ibid.*, III, 203, on the discussion, or debate (*munāzara*), which was about to take place (in AH 309, AD 921/2) between Ṭabarī and his critics, adherents of the Ḥanbalī doctrine, at ʿAlī Ibn ʿIsā, but the Ḥanbalīs did not appear. Apparently, the custom of the *majālis*, encounters of the rulers—the caliph and the vizier—with the religious jurists and other scholars of the caliphate, started in the days of al-Ma'mūn, see Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 401, who notes that the *ustādh* (meaning here, apparently, a kind of moderator) in those sessions of al-Ma'mūn was Abū'l-Hudhayl Muḥammad b. al-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (see also above, sec. 169). Ḥamid b. ʿAbbās and the farming out of taxes: Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 116. See more on Ḥamid: Hamadānī, 31f.; Bowen, *ibid.* 179f.

towards the Qarmaṭīs (an Ismaʿīlī sect of a Persian nature). They adhere to star worship, and they still exist in Baṣra, in *sikkaṭ* (street) *quraysh*". Their prominent personality in his day was Abū Muḥammad. "Even though they consider themselves to be among the nobles, they are the lowest of the rabble"; their views are immature; and he continues to warn against them, saying that they are a danger to the Muslims and should be fought with the sword. Ibn al-Nadīm, in the *Fihrist*, mentions Abū'l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī'l-Baḡhl, whose origins were in Iṣfahān and who was a vizier at the time of al-Muqtadir (this is not accurate, as we shall see below), and was a person with fine qualities, learned, expressive, an excellent poet, and left a book with traditions regarding the conquest of Baṣra.

We learn about the first stage of the rivalry between the sons of Abī'l-Baḡhl and ʿAlī Ibn al-Furāt, from Hilāl al-Šābi'. When he was first appointed vizier (at the end of 908) Ibn al-Furāt conspired against Aḥmad b. Abī'l-Baḡhl, but the latter succeeded in appeasing him through one of the vizier's associates, until the vizier promised him a letter of protection (*amān*) on condition that he leave Baghdad, retire to ʿAbbadān, and live there the life of a Šūfī ascetic. Ibn al-Furāt even agreed to transfer to him, via the same associate, a check (*ṣakk*) for 3,000 dirhams, to provide for his sustenance. However, when that associate came to the house of Ibn Abī'l-Baḡhl, he discovered that he had fled through the roof to an adjacent ruin. They looked for him, at the order of Ibn al-Furāt, who expressed sorrow that the former had not trusted the *amān* that he had granted him. The end of that affair is not known.

In describing the time when Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā Ibn Khāqān served as vizier, Ibn Miskawayh wrote about the two brothers, Aḥmad and Muḥammad, in greater detail. When Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā became vizier in the days of al-Muqtadir (he, not Muḥammad Ibn Abī'l-Baḡhl; see the above list: in July 912) he appointed Abū'l-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī'l-Baḡhl to investigate ʿAlī Ibn al-Furāt and his cronies and secretaries, and put him in charge of the *dīwān al-muṣādirīn*—the expropriation office—and the *dīwān al-ḡiyāʿ al-ʿabbāsiyya* and the *dīwān zimām al-furātiyya* (the administrative offices of the caliph's estates and the villages in the Euphrates area). When his brother entered such an important office, Muḥammad Ibn Abī'l-Baḡhl, who was staying in Iṣfahān, sought to influence the court to appoint his brother Aḥmad as vizier, and squandered much money over it, but his anticipation ended in disappointment, even though Caliph al-Muqtadir was at first inclined towards it. He even sent the brother of the *qahrmāna* Umm Mūsā (the right-hand woman of the caliph's mother) to Ahwāz, to meet Aḥmad Ibn Abī'l-Baḡhl, with the intention of appointing him vizier. The two met in Wāsiṭ, and the *qahrmāna*'s brother even received a bribe of 3,000 dinars, but, as stated above, the brothers' anticipation ended in disappointment. As said above, Muḥammad Ibn Khāqān was even given permission to imprison the two brothers and send them away from Baghdad; again, through pressure from cronies of the caliph's mother, the caliph nevertheless put them in charge of the land tax collection in the area of Iṣfahān and its environs, and of Baṣra. ʿAlī Ibn al-Furāt, who was the sworn enemy of these brothers, did not succeed, when becoming vizier the second time in 917, either to send them away or to persecute them, because of the support of the caliph's mother, and especially that of the

qahrmāna, Umm Mūsā. Hilāl al-Šābi' speaks of a fine of 6,000 dinars that 'Alī Ibn al-Furāt levied on Ibn Abī'l-Baghl in AH 282, AD 895, after proving the serious shortcomings found in his accountings. A story of Tanūkhī's testifies to the cruelty of the two brothers, the sons of Abī'l-Baghl, with a description of the tortures they used to extort money. It is clear from the sources that the brothers' status was dependent on the degree of power of the party at the court, centered about the caliph's mother and Umm Mūsā. Al-Muqtadir was to a great extent subject to the influence of this party. Some of the details that I have noted above, undoubtedly influenced the shaping of the story regarding Neṭīrā, that will be presented below.³⁶²

(363) After having described the general background and some of the details regarding the political and economic life of the caliphate, I will now discuss one of the affairs pertaining to Babylonian Jewry about which we have important contemporary source information. Both the Arabic sources and the Jewish ones reiterate and emphasize the great involvement of the Jewish financiers in the policies and economics of the period, and their activity in close proximity to the policy makers, the caliphs and their assistants, especially the viziers. Sources in the Geniza provide additional important information about another facet of the activities of these financiers, their great involvement in Jewish public life. There was beyond a doubt a constant connection between the two aspects of their status, that of their great wealth and political clout, and that of their standing in the community. Like the families of the *nesi'im*, the exilarchic dynasty and the scholars of the Babylonian yeshivot, these financiers were part of the elite of Babylonian Jewry. There is no possibility, of course, to determine the actual scope of this stratum of wealthy people, however, the sources revolve, as stated, around only a few names. Joseph b. Pinḥās and his son-in-law Neṭīrā, and Aaron b. 'Amram, they and their families and descendants are at the center of the information.

It seems that the earliest information about these financiers is in Tanūkhī, who presents statements of Sahl b. Naẓīr (=Neṭīrā), who—as we shall soon see—was the head of the family after the death of his father Neṭīrā, in 916; Sahl talks about his grandfather, who had the same name, Sahl b. Neṭīrā, who, he says, was the *jahbadh* of the vizier, 'Ubaydallah b.

³⁶² See 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Tathbūt*, I, 42. Ibn al-Nadīm, 137. Hilāl al-Šābi', *Wuzarā'*, 83f.; Ibn Miskawaih, I, 21f., 41f.; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 63ff.; the names in Hilāl al-Šābi''s account, *Wuzarā'* (Amedroz), 165-167, 262; (Cairo), 291-296, 382, seem to be garbled since he speaks about Abū'l-Husayn 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Abī'l-Baghl, and it seems that it should be: Aḥmad b. Abī'l-Baghl. See also *al-ʿUyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq*, IV, MS Berlin, Wetzstein, II, 342, 107, 157, and see there the comments ascribed to 'Alī Ibn 'Isā when referring to Ibn Abī'l-Baghl: "a criminal without any fear of God"; similarly: 'Arīb, 40; Tanūkhī, *Nishwār* (Margoliouth), 183ff.; *idem* (Beirut), VIII, 93, and see *al-ʿUyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq* (above in this note), 72a. The two brothers, sons of Abī'l-Baghl, were dismissed from their posts and imprisoned, in AH 299, AD 911/2; see also 'Arīb, 40, who adds that the vizier Muḥammad b. Khāqān bribed the caliph's mother with 50,000 dinars in order to prevent the appointment of Ibn Abī'l-Baghl in his stead; see also *ibid.*, 109; in 310 (922/3), 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Abī'l-Baghl was one of the contenders for the office of vizier. Cf. also Mez, 329, Sourdél, *Vizirat*, 364, 397, 408, 413 n. 3. Maṣ'ūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 198f., mentions a certain Bughayl (diminutive of Baghl) and his son, both adepts of the seditionist Waṣif; al-Muṭṭaqid had them brought from the area of the Syrian coast to Baghdad (January 901). It seems that they were not related to the family of Ibn Abī'l-Baghl, and the doubts of Harkavy, *Berliner Festschr.*, 42, about this were well-founded.

Sulaymān, from the time he was a young man until his death. Here there is a sentence which requires examination. °Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān was first appointed vizier in the time of al-Muʿtamid, in 891, while—as we shall soon see—in the same year or somewhat later, the *jahbadh* mentioned in the sources is Neṭīrā, the son of the first Sahl. It may be that the father and the son worked together. In all events, if this is so, it may be that Sahl served as °Ubaydallah's *jahbadh* even before he was appointed vizier; or that Tanūkhī switched °Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān with another °Ubaydallah, b. Yahyā, who was already vizier in the early 850s, at the time of al-Mutawakkil, then again in 870-877. In any case, the gist of the event takes place towards the end of al-Muʿtamid's days, when °Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān became embroiled with al-Muwaffaq, the caliph's brother, and was thrown in jail. Sahl b. Neṭīrā customarily sent the prisoner's family 100 dinars a month, and continued to do so even after his release, until °Ubaydallah was appointed vizier, in June 891. Then °Ubaydallah found out that Sahl used to send 100 dinars a month to Baṣra, to the family of Jarāda, the secretary of Ismaʿīl Ibn Bulbul, al-Muʿtamid's vizier. This Ismaʿīl was hated by the new caliph, al-Muʿtaḍid (who had him executed) and by °Ubaydallah, while his secretary Jarāda was imprisoned. The essence of the story is that °Ubaydallah controlled his anger and understood the humane gesture of his Jewish *jahbadh*. However, it is clear that not only humanitarian motives and ethical behavior were involved, but also the capricious nature of rulers, for appointments to high posts and imprisonment, torture and executions, took place intermittently.

The first mention in the Jewish sources of some of these financiers and their families, is in *akhbār baghdād*. In the well-known section known as "the story of Nathan the Babylonian", the preserved Judeo Arabic source says, when beginning to describe the controversy between °Uqbā and Kohen Šedeq (above, secs. 137-140): "and he, Kohen Šedeq, had as supporters (against him, i.e., against °Uqbā) Joseph b. Pinḥās and his son-in-law, his daughter's husband, Neṭīrā, father of Sahl and Ishaq, with some of the ringleaders of the city".

In the other section of this report, all of it from the Geniza, in the Judeo-Arabic parlance, there is the story of Neṭīrā and his sons. Here the main heroes are Neṭīrā (apparently: b. Sahl), Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid, and Ibn Abī'l-Baḡhl (above, in the previous section, I presented the essence of our information about this family; we cannot know which of the family's sons is the one mentioned in this story, whether Aḥmad or his brother Muḥammad, or someone else in the family). The story has a touch of the legendary about it, yet certainly contains a kernel of truth. The beginning is missing, but the story implied is, that at the request of Ibn Abī'l-Baḡhl, the caliph was about to dismiss Neṭīrā, who, as we know, was the *jahbadh* of the vizier, °Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān. This dismissal was supposed to be accompanied, according to the regular practice we know of, by the confiscation of his property, his imprisonment (and that of the members of his family) and torture to extort money. The property was supposed to go into the hands of Ibn Abī'l-Baḡhl. Here, as in the stories of the exilarchic dynasty, a dream generates a miracle, but it is not King David who emerges in the caliph's dream, but the Prophet Elijah. The wheel does a 180 degree turn; the caliph summons Neṭīrā, who is certain that he is about to climb to the gallows;

therefore, he dresses in a shroud and spreads embalming perfumes over his body. Yet all the caliph wants, is to know the meaning of the dream; when he learns the facts he turns Ibn Abī'l-Baghl and all his possessions over to Neṭīrā; actually, with the help of the caliph's soldiers, Neṭīrā threw Ibn Abī'l-Baghl into the dungeon and seized all his property for himself, except for the slaves and the maidservants whom he seeks to turn over to the caliph; however, the latter refuses to take them, so Neṭīrā gives them to the courtiers. The historical kernel of this story should be sought in the rivalry between the sons of Abī'l-Baghl and the vizier, ʿUbaydallah b. Sulaymān, the protector of the Jewish financiers at the time of al-Muʿtaḍid. The caliph even suggests exempting the Jews from the *jizya* (poll tax) payment, but Neṭīrā explains that it was not desirable to do so, for it was thanks to that tax that the Jews enjoyed security for their lives and property; moreover, it may perhaps come to pass that one of the caliph's successors might rescind the exemption, he might even want to collect the tax for the unpaid years, something that would be a calamity for Jews unable to pay such large sums in one go. The caliph then decided to collect the payment as the Prophet had prescribed, and it was Neṭīrā who collected it from the Jews. According to the chronicle, this took place nine-and-a-half years before al-Muʿtaḍid's death (we know the date, 5 April 902), i.e., around November 892, just a short while, a few weeks, after al-Muʿtaḍid became caliph (15 October of that year). If this story has a grain of truth, it is that Ibn Abī'l-Baghl had indeed intended to imprison Neṭīrā, at the order of the caliph, and seize his property. Yet it seems that just then Ibn Abī'l-Baghl lost grace, while Neṭīrā maintained his standing; it may very well be that he was also granted the authority to collect the *jizya*, as a lump sum, from the Jews. That same source also tells us about the anti-Jewish riots fomented by the Ṣūfis in Baghdad, when they demonstrated outside the caliph's palace on the bank of the Tigris, and of the bitter end of the instigators—their apprehension and drowning in the Tigris after having their bones broken—all thanks to Neṭīrā. This undoubtedly shows influence of the traditions circulating in Baghdad regarding al-Muʿtaḍid, about 30-40 years after his death, about his dreams, the tax alleviations he instituted, and his vigorous nature, as we have seen above. We have also seen the court infighting in which the sons of Abī'l-Baghl were involved, all of it documented by the Arab chroniclers.

Neṭīrā continued to fill the function of court *jahbadh* for al-Muʿtaḍid's successors (as implied, even though the story skips over his first successor, al-Muktafi, mentioning only al-Muqtadir, 908-932). According to the same source, he filled the role until his death, when al-Muqtadir had been caliph for eight years, in other words, Neṭīrā died in 916.

There is no mention at all in *akhbār baghdād* of the other financier, Aaron b. ʿAmram; it seems that the author, or narrator, was closer to the Neṭīrā family. The only Jewish source that mentions Aaron is the letter of the Palestinian gaon, Meir (or of his son, Aaron), who wrote to the people of Babylonia during the calendar controversy in the summer of 1233 Sel., i.e., AD 922, where he makes favorable mention of "the diadem of Israel, our precious and pleasant jewel.... Aaron son of Master ʿAmram may he rest in Paradise, savior of the generation, who has not inclined his ear away from God's laws; therefore may He keep him and give his life joy on Earth

and add more honor and splendor to his honor and splendor, and preserve him and his two sons, of reputable seed" etc.³⁶³

(364) At the time of al-Muqtadir, the prominent *jahbadhs*, according to our information from the Arab sources, were Joseph b. Pinḥās and Aaron b. °Amram. True, one of the first steps ascribed to al-Muqtadir at the beginning of his caliphate, was, as stated above, the prohibition on employing Jews and Christians in state posts (AH 296, approximately congruent with AD 909); however, he noted two exceptions in his order: physicians and *jahbadhs*. The status of the two Jewish *jahbadhs* is displayed in the affair of the dismissal of the vizier, °Alī Ibn al-Furāt, from office, in AH 306, Jumādā II, i.e., November 918. According to one of the sources, Hāmid Ibn al-°Abbās collected 700,000 dinars from these two Jewish *jahbadhs* that the dismissed vizier had deposited with them. Another source, Hilāl al-Šābi', says that Ibn al-Furāt was the one who had appointed "Yūsuf b. Fīnḥās and Hārūn b. °Imrān", and with them, only with them, did he deposit all of the money seized from those who were executed and from others; he deposited these monies neither in the caliph's treasury or the caliphate treasury. Ibn al-Furāt's secretary, Abū °Abdallah Ibn Farjawayh, was in charge of settling accounts with these *jahbadhs*, none of which was brought to the attention of the authorities. In the year of his imprisonment (i.e., 918), Ibn al-Furāt sent a letter to the manager of the treasury, Mu'nis, writing the following (among other things):

The account of Yūsuf b. Fīnḥās and Hārūn b. °Imrān shows that such and such a (sum of) was deposited (noting everything in full) and the sum remaining with them after what was sent to his magnificence the caliph.... and what was spent for purposes ordered by him and the princes.... in dirhams: a thousand thousands and four hundred and seventy thousand five hundred forty six. And he ordered Mu'nis to receive this sum from them and have it transferred to the caliph's treasury; and Mu'nis received it from them

³⁶³ Tanūkhī (Beirut), III, 31ff.; undoubtedly *ayyām al-fitna* (the days of the civil strife) is a scribe's misreading, and it should be: *al-futuwwa*. Margoliouth, *JC*, 5 (1931), 181, translates: civil war, assuming that the days after the murder of al-Mutawakkil (861) are meant. Cf. Sourdel, *Vizirat*, 389; Fischel, *Jews*, 32 n. 6, cites Tanūkhī's version, without discerning that Naẓīr and Neṭīrā are identical. Massignon, *RB*, 52 (1942), 12, also misinterpreted the text of Tanūkhī, as dealing in fact with °Ubaydallah b. Yahyā (al-Khāqānī), although he rightly understood that the latter surrendered, at the beginning of 861, the monopoly over the finances of Ahwāz to Sahl b. Neṭīrā, preferring the Jews over the Christians, which was related to the worsening relations between the caliphate and the Byzantines. Though I do not detect Massignon's sources for it, it is understandable that, by the mid-ninth century, the Neṭīrā family occupied an important position in the caliphate's financial dealings. The mention of Joseph b. Pinḥās and his son-in-law Neṭīrā, see 12, I, a, ll. 9-11, and in Hebrew: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 78. See the story of Neṭīrā, 11; events the description of which were not preserved are alluded to in the continuation, 11, I, b, ll. 10-11. On the severe discord between the sons of Abī'l-Baḡhl and the vizier °Ubaydallah b. Sulaymān, see al-Makhzūmī, *Minḥāj*, 34. The story of the coffins and the embalming was influenced by an Arab tradition referring to the time of al-Ma'mūn: the caliph sent to call for al-Ḥārith b. Miskīn, after he said some things which displeased the caliph; when announced that he was wanted by the caliph, al-Ḥārith went to the palace clad in shrouds, whereas the caliph only intended to let him know that he had gotten over his anger; see Ibn °Abd Rabbīh, *ʿIqd*, (1953-65), I, 67; cf. Lammens, *Études*, 107. On the palace of al-Mu'taḍid on the bank of the Tigris see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, V, 143. He ordered its building in AH 280, AD 893. See on Neṭīrā also Fischel, *ibid.*, 34-43. The letter of the Palestinian gaon: Bornstein, *Sokolow Jub. Vol.*, 105; Guillaume, *JQR*, NS 5 (1914/5), 553.

and they were left with nothing, and not known is how much was originally deposited with them, and not on what they spent the money; the secretaries estimate that the sum was a thousand thousand dinars.

Hishām b. °Abdallah, later appointed by °Alī Ibn °Isā to be a kind of chief administrator, says that he was ordered to summon the two *jahbadhs* and interrogate them about those sums. They claimed that Ibn al-Furāt had received an accounting from them. °Alī b. °Isā then ordered them jailed and threatened, however, they presented him with an unarranged draft of an accounting. After more pressure, they admitted that 100,000 dirhams had remained, but that they had spent it. Hāshim fined them 10,000 dinars which they did, indeed, pay, but °Alī Ibn °Isā wanted more, and tried to continue extorting them. Ḥamd b. Muḥammad, who was in charge of continuing their interrogation, announced that there was no evidence against them, they even had proof that they had paid it all, and one may rely on Ibn al-Furāt that he did not leave them a penny. Nevertheless, Hishām succeeded in extorting another 200,000 dirhams, then °Alī Ibn °Isā issued a document that they had paid. In the end he did not give up their services and stipulated that they would send him 30,000 dirhams each month for the army, moreover that they advance him on the first of every month 150,000 dirhams to be returned to them from the taxes collected in Ahwāz; he turned the monetary administration (*jahbadha*) of the Ahwāz area over to them as a regular concession, and also the monies allocated to Ḥāmid by the treasury every month to pay salaries, a total of 20,000 dinars. It appears that the implication of that fragment of the Arabic chronicle is, that according to °Alī Ibn °Isā's account, they had to send him 180,000 dirhams at the beginning of each month and receive in lieu 20,000 dinars, which, when calculated at 10 dirhams to the dinar, came to 200,000 dirhams. After they at first refused, the two Jewish *jahbadhs* accepted the proposal, and continued to meet these stipulations and serve in this status for 16 years; if the agreement was drawn up at the beginning of 919, this continued until 935, during the time of the two of them and of their inheritors. However, as stated before, the beginning of the two's status was connected to the rise of °Alī Ibn al-Furāt. He was first appointed vizier at the end of 908, and it appears that already at that time, or thereabouts, he gave the two of them the management of the monies from the tax income of the districts of Ahwāz. When he needed money, he would "summon Yūsuf b. Finḥās, the Jewish *jahbadh*, who was the *jahbadh* of Ahwāz", and demand money from him, and the latter would at first attempt to explain that there was insufficient income, but would in the end accept filling the order. Hilāl al-Sābi' mainly emphasizes the status of Hārūn b. °Imrān, and it appears that he was the first one with such fast ties to the vizier, °Alī Ibn al-Furāt. In June 924, while in jail, after being dismissed from the viziery, Ibn al-Furāt made sure to dispatch the last accounting of his dealings with the *jahbadh* Aaron b. °Amram. The remainder deposited with him, from the expropriation money, was 155,200 dinars, about which Ibn al-Furāt sought to inform Caliph al-Muqtadir. The latter quickly ordered that Aaron be arrested, that the money be taken away from him and deposited in the caliph's treasury (*bayt māl al-khāṣṣa*), without the knowledge of the new vizier, °Abdallah b. Muḥammad al-Khāqānī. When °Alī Ibn al-Furāt sought

to be generous with ʿAlī Ibn ʿĪsā, he took a sheet of paper and wrote an order to Aaron b. ʿAmram, the same also being done by al-Muḥassin, his son, the father for 2,000, the son for 1,000 dinars—i.e., they granted him 3,000 dinars out of what they had expropriated from him. It is reasonable to assume that this apparent exclusive mention of Aaron b. ʿAmram derived from the fact that Joseph b. Pinḥās died in about 920. His son-in-law Neṭīrā died before him, in 916, as we have seen. It appears that his father-in-law, Joseph b. Pinḥās, lived for a few years after him, while after his death Aaron b. ʿAmram had seniority, whereas Joseph b. Pinḥās' successor, was his still-young grandson, Sahl b. Neṭīrā.³⁶⁴

(365) Fischel expressed the opinion that these two families of Jewish *jahbadhs* had their offices in a Baghdad street named *darb ʿawn*. Actually, some of the sources mention a street by this name, and implied therein is that this was the center of the money changers (*al-ṣayārīf*). However, from the Neṭīrā story we learn that the house of his son Sahl (before then, also apparently of his predecessors) was in *darb jamīl*, in the *qaṭʿa* (quarter) of *al-rabīʿ*. It seems that this was the area where a number of distinguished notables of the state were concentrated and where they had their palaces (see also above, sec. 284).

Even though, as we have seen above, the Jewish *jahbadhs* tried to adopt as neutral a stance as possible in the stormy battles between the rival parties in the Abbasid state, it appears that sometimes they were drawn into the maelstrom of events—usually bloody—of the period. Thus the name of Aaron b. ʿAmram was linked to the bitter fate of the mystic al-Ḥallāj, executed in 921, in the story ascribed to Zanjī, the secretary of the vizier Ibn al-Furāt, as told by his son, Abū'l-Qāsim Ismaʿīl; Aaron b. ʿAmram arrived at the court of law of the vizier, Ḥāmid Ibn ʿAbbās (the enemy and persecutor of al-Ḥallāj), when the meeting had ended. He was in the company of Zanjī, when Ḥāmid's servant (*ghulām*) suddenly appeared and summoned Aaron b. ʿAmram; the latter went with him and returned a short while later, confused, after hearing the servant's story, whose essence was that when he had brought food for al-Ḥallāj, he found him filling the room from the ceiling to the floor and from wall to wall. The servant, frightened, dropped the food and came running to tell the Jewish *jahbadh* what had happened.

³⁶⁴ Al-Muqtadir's restrictive order regarding offices: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, MS BL Or 4619, 41b. Ibn Taghrī Bardī, *Nujūm*, III, 165. There is a detailed discussion of the events which brought about the dismissal of Ibn al-Furāt, in Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 110-112 (without mention of the Jewish financiers). See ʿArīb, 74: Ibn al-Furāt kept 750,000 dinars with the Jewish *jahbadhs*; Hilāl al-Šābi', *Wuzarā'*, 79-81, was even able to mention, while assembling a list of honorary titles that must be included in official correspondence, that in letters to Yūsuf b. Pinḥās and Hārūn b. ʿImrān (also: to Zakariyyā b. Yuhannā, a Christian who served as one of the state's *jahbadhs*) one must include the formula *abqāka allah*, may God preserve you; at the head of the letter one has to put the *kunya* "Abū so-and-so", the name and the father's name, and add: *abqāhu allah* (may God preserve him, i.e., the addressee). See *ibid.*, 158f. The revenue from al-Ahwāz: Hilāl, *ibid.*, 178; Hilāl pointing out Aaron b. ʿAmram: *ibid.*, 306; the fact that Neṭīrā died before his father-in-law Joseph b. Pinḥās was discerned by Fischel, *Jews*, 44, as well, and he even notes an assumption there (without any proof), that it was his son-in-law's death that caused Joseph b. Pinḥās to enter into business relations with Aaron b. ʿAmram. The account about the relations between Ibn al-Furāt and the two Jewish *jahbadhs* is included, with small changes, in Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, VIII (Beirut), 38ff. See a brief compendium of the sources on this matter also in Zakī, *al-Muqtabas*, 3 (1908), 425.

In the end he was severely reprimanded by the vizier for believing in al-Ḥallāj's deceitful acts. What is of interest to us here is, that in a roundabout way we learn about the social connection between these money changers and the high state officials. Massignon even went so far as to add from his imagination, and derive from this act that it may be assumed that the Jewish *jahbadh* was the person in charge of guarding al-Ḥallāj.³⁶⁵

(366) A source in the Geniza tells us that after Neṭīrā's death (916), his son, Sahl, the older of his two sons (the other one's name was Isaac), continued in his father's post, and was the caliph's *jahbadh*, the implication being that his main function was dealing with tax monies; however, he was not listed among the *rizq* receivers, i.e., of succor, or a salary, from the caliph's treasury. He would get a one-time annual payment of 500 dinars, which however he would not keep it for himself, but distribute it among the state's mighty, the caliph's viziers. The same source tells us that he had a market in Fāris (apparently meaning: Ahwāz), that brought him an income of 2,000 dirhams a week, i.e., over 10,000 dinars a year. The source goes so far as tell of the many favors that he did for the Jews and his acts of charity. He feeds many poor people, about 200-400 on the Sabbath, especially—as is implied—the scholars among them. Sahl was the student of Saadia Gaon and was himself learned, alert and a scholar. Moreover, he would, with great generosity, even distribute charity, gifts and clothes to important Muslims, and allot money to their *sharīfs*, the family of ʿAlī in Kūfa, and to the Hāshimites. Sahl b. Naṣīr (no. 2) is indeed mentioned in the Arabic sources, and said of him is that he would collect the tax in the districts of al-Ahwāz at the time of al-Rādī, in AH 324 (AD 936); however, this is not to say that he had this status in that year alone; we also do not know whether he continued to preserve his standing after Abū ʿAbdallah Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Barīdī took over the area, in that year. Even if he continued in his post, he met his end not long afterwards, no later than 326, AD 938, when he was murdered, apparently after being tortured; the source notes: "recently they placed a pan with (burning) coals on the belly of Sahl b. Naṣīr the *jahbadh*".

It appears that with the death of Sahl b. Neṭīrā (we know nothing of what happened to his brother Isaac), came the end of the period of prominence of the descendants of Joseph b. Pinḥās, and of his son-in-law, Neṭīrā. Saadia Gaon (above, sec. 144) still mentions in one breath, "the important notables in Baghdad, among whom we live, the sons of Master Neṭīrā and the sons of Master Aaron, may the memory of the ingathered (the deceased)

³⁶⁵ Darb ʿAwn: Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, II, 192; see *ibid.*, 133, mention of "one of the money changers among those in the ʿAwn street (was) the money changer Ibn ʿAbdān". Ibn Miskawaih, I, 247: "the money changers of the ʿAwn street" (in AD 933); II, 188 "...a money changer in the home of Abū ʿAlī, another one in the ʿAwn street" (AD 961); Yāqūt, *Irshād*, I, 399: "to ʿAwn street, to the money changer". Another base of money changers is mentioned: *dār al-biṭṭikh*, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taʾrīkh*, VII, 456; Fischel, *Jews*, 10 n. 4; Massignon, *La passion*, I, 551 n. 2; Busse, *Chalif*, 482; Sahl b. Neṭīrā's abode: II, III, a, l. 19. See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *ibid.*, I, 88f., who explains the ancient names of the quarters of Baghdad: they are the names of the helpers and retainers of Caliph al-Manṣūr, the founder of the city (see more details above, sec. 284). The event of al-Ḥallāj: ʿArīb, 91; Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, VI, 86—as cited by the editor from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, see the latter's *Taʾrīkh*, VIII, 137f.; cf. Massignon, *ibid.*, 550ff.; his idea, that it was Aaron b. ʿAmram who was in charge of guarding al-Ḥallāj was also accepted by Fischel, *ibid.*, 21 n.3.

be blessed". Thus he mentions them a short while after becoming gaon, 928, in his letter to the Fustat communities, where he asks the people of Fustat, his followers and his students, to turn to him when necessary, and that he would have the distinguished people of Baghdad act in their interests, for then Egypt was in the middle period between Ṭulūnid rule and that of the Ikshīd, and, at least theoretically, under Baghdad's rule. In a round-about way we also learn that Aaron b. ʿAmram died a short time before 928, for the gaon mentions him along with the blessing for the deceased. As stated above, after the story of al-Ḥallāj (921), we see Aaron b. ʿAmram mentioned in the letter of the Palestinian gaon during the calendar controversy (in the year 922), and in Ibn Miskawaih, where there is the order of Ibn al-Furāt to pay 2,000 dinars to ʿAlī Ibn ʿĪsā, that was mentioned above (923); and when Ibn al-Furāt was taken off to jail, he asked that the caliph be notified about the remainder of the funds deposited with the Jewish *jahbadh* (June 924). Aaron's son was his father's right-hand man, for, as we have seen, Ibn al-Furāt wanted to prepare an accounting of the deposits with Aaron b. ʿAmram and his son.

The first of Aaron's sons mentioned in the Jewish sources, is Bishr b. Aaron, in *akhbār baghdād*, in the Hebrew version of the text called the story of Nathan the Babylonian. The Baghdad community appeals to this Bishr, in about 937, to work towards making peace, by the way telling us that that Bishr was the father-in-law of Khalaf (Aaron) b. Sarjāda (Joseph), who would later become gaon of Pumbedita: "Bishr b. Aaron, who is the father-in-law of Caleb b. Shargado, who was (meaning Bishr) a great man in Babylonia and one of the most important people there". Below, we shall see that Bishr apparently had two brothers, ʿAlī and Abraham. One should be aware that from this point the hard information about the sons of Neṭīrā (the grandsons of Joseph b. Pinḥās) ends; the last explicit information on them is about the execution of Sahl b. Neṭīrā, apparently in 938; the decline of the descendants of Neṭīrā was of importance in the development of the internal struggle in Babylonian Jewry at the time of Saadia Gaon, with which I have already dealt (above, sec. 145).

In the spring of 953—in a copy of the letter of a personality of the Pumbedita yeshiva, whose name we do not know with certainty (see above, secs. 147, 226, my assumption that his name was Naḥshōn), only that he was the grandson of Ṭōv, we therefore call him here "Ṭōv's grandson"—mentioned are Aaron and Moses the sons of Abraham b. Aaron. The writer is a descendant of geonim, and he is writing to a personality in Spain, perhaps to Ḥisdai Ibn Shaprūt. Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, i.e., Khalaf b. Sarjāda, was then head of the Pumbedita yeshiva, while the writer apparently belonged to the party of Sherira b. Ḥananiah, who later became gaon. While bemoaning the distress and deprivation of some of the yeshiva people, Ṭōv's grandson says in his letter:

...we have been robbed and only received a little (of what was sent to the yeshiva) which was saved by our *nāsī* Solomon (i.e., b. Josiah) the exilarch.... also, your generosity and what you donated at this time and which you sent via the elder, the distinguished noble of the people and the one who is the faithful merchant, who there is none like him in our city among the elders in fear of God and humility, and in purveying justice and charity, our Lord and Master Aaron, and his worthy and distinguished brother

Moses, may God guard them and increase their wealth, sons of our Lord and Master Abraham b. Aaron, of blessed memory; the robber (his Pumbedita rival) sought to swallow and tear apart this (donation).

In the continuation, as well, towards the end of his lengthy letter, the writer notes, "and may your letters (be sent) via the glorious hoary elder, the diadem, Lord Aaron, may his Creator bless him". One gets the impression that there were fast ties between Sherira's party in the Pumbedita yeshiva and the family of the sons of Aaron, and it appears that the sons of Aaron helped that party, among other things, also with their Spanish ties, thanks to the trade relations that they used to have.

In 962, and shortly thereafter, the Pumbedita gaon, Nehemiah b. Kohen Sedeq, mentions the sons of Aaron in his letters: "everything will be through the sons of Aaron, may God preserve them", i.e., it is through them that the monies from Fustat should be sent to Babylonia. In the third of the three letters, the gaon switches to the singular: "the son of Aaron the Baghdadī", and it appears that there was kind of a family tie between the Babylonian yeshivot and the sons of Aaron. Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī notes in his letter to the gaon, Samuel b. Hophni, that he received the letter of the gaon via Abū'l-Faraj Benjamin b. Moses b. Aaron (7 August 999); Mann had already noticed that this Benjamin b. Moses was apparently also of that family of Baghdad financiers. A generation later, we find the letter of an anonymous merchant (only the name of his father, Solomon, has been preserved), a native of Egypt, who spent many years in the East, and at the age of 80, sought to return to the land of his origin. He had deposited money with Solomon b. Aaron in Baghdad, even noting that this financier lives in the *sūq lu'lu'* (pearls market), in the quarter (*maḥalla*) called 'Alī al-Ṭawil.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁶ Sahl inherits his father's position: 11, III, a, ll. 20-21, and see there also his liberalities towards the *shariṣ*; b, l. 18; a, ll. 18ff. In that period the two categories of *ashraf*, the Banū 'Alī and the Banū Hāshim, had a common leader, see Hamadānī, *Takmila*, 16 (AH 302, which began on 27 July 914); in that year Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Tūma (or Tūmār) al-Hāshimī, who was the *naqīb* of the Abbasids, died, and his son Muḥammad inherited his position. Aḥmad was 92 years old when he died. Cf. Bowen, *Life*, 74f. (he read Hamadānī in the manuscript, with slightly different details). Al-Barīdī takes over the region of al-Ahwāz: Canard, *Hamadanides*, 510f., with more references. See the entry al-Barīdī (by D. Sourdel) in *Et*. See on the sons of Neṭirā and the sons of Aaron and on Sahl and Isaac, also: Friedländer, *JQR*, 17 (1904/5), 749. Sahl's death: Ibn Miskawaih, I, 379. Saadia Gaon: 8, c; see also Mann, *JQR*, NS 7 (1916/7), 466f. Bishr b. Aaron: Neubauer, *Med. J. Chr.*, II, 82. The letters of Nehemiah Gaon: 15, l. 23; 17, l. 9; 18, l. 16. The anonymous merchant: 17, a, ll. 14-18. Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī: 58, a, ll. 9-10. Cf. Mann, *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 177. The connection between "the sons of Aaron" of the Jewish sources and Hārūn b. 'Imrān was first discerned by Fischel, *Jews*, 37f. See the letter of the grandson of Ṭōv: 13, vi, ll. 6-21; xi, ll. 6-8; Mann, *JQR*, NS 8 (1917/8), 342, also first thought that the Aaron mentioned here belonged to the anonymous "sons of Aaron" mentioned in the other sources, i.e. that he was Aaron b. 'Amram's grandson. In his above-mentioned article in *Tarbiz*, 5 (1933/4), 174, he changed his mind, assuming that a grandson can only be named after his grandfather, after the latter's death; since Aaron b. 'Amram was still alive in 924 (as implied above, he probably died some time before 928), his grandson still could not have been the "superb elder and crowned senior" as said in the letter of the grandson of Ṭōv. He therefore assumed that some other family of Baghdadī rich men was meant; but he was wrong, since in those days people would name their children after their own parents, even if the latter were still alive. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, III, 6f., already wrote about this, noting Mann's error, which led him to incorrect conclusions in a number of cases. Scheiber, *Tarbiz*, 48 (1978/9), 352f.,

(367) A number of Arabic sources mention Jewish figures, financiers close to the army commanders and high caliphate officials, administering their affairs, collecting taxes for them, and the like. The name often appearing among the names of the antecedents of those figures is Khalaf. This name is generally the Arabic equivalent of the name Aaron, because it means an alternate, substitute, someone who fills the place of, which was the status of Aaron, the priest, in relation to Moses, his brother. The central Jewish personality in the period under discussion, whose name was Aaron and also Khalaf, was Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph, who was the gaon of Pumbedita. On the other hand, Aaron b. ʿAmram, the financier, is not mentioned by the name Khalaf in the Jewish sources. It is for that reason that I have ascribed (in a study published in 1980) the information found in the Arabic sources to the descendants of the aforementioned gaon. Now, more than 15 years hence (the time of writing), I am forced to beg the gaon and great one of Israel's forgiveness, for having ascribed his (putative) descendants to the world of finance; even though he himself was not very far from it. He was, after all, as I have already noted above, the son-in-law of Bishr b. Aaron b. ʿAmram, that is, the gaon's wife was the granddaughter of Aaron b. ʿAmram, and his sons (if he indeed had sons)—the latter's great grandsons. Now I prefer assuming that we are dealing with the sons of Aaron b. ʿAmram, the financier himself, who were ʿAlī and Abraham, Bishr's brothers.

In the contemporary Arabic sources we encounter ʿAlī b. Khalaf (or: b. Hārūn) b. Ṭanāb (or Ṭiyāb, or Ṭabāb). Ibn Miskawayh mentions him as the lessee of the royal estates and their *kharāj* (land tax) at the time of al-Muqtadir, in 931 (i.e., a few years after the death of Aaron b. ʿAmram). He establishes a tie with Yāqūt, the caliph's official, who is in charge of the *kharāj* in the Shīrāz area, to conceal the income and not transmit it to Baghdad. They succeed, until ʿAlī b. Būyē becomes the ruler of the area of Fāris, i.e., the southwestern area of Persia, on 7 July 934. (ʿAlī b. Būyē, one of three brothers, was at the head of the Daylami north Persian tribes and it was he who started taking over the rule of the caliphate, first in Iṣfahān, then in Fāris; he was known by the nickname, given to him by the caliph, ʿImād al-dawla.) The two of them, ʿAlī b. Khalaf and Yāqūt, enjoyed the support of the vizier, Ibn Muqla, and ʿAlī b. Khalaf was even put in charge of the *kharāj* in all of southern Persia, i.e., in the districts of Fāris and Kirmān, at the time of Caliph al-Rādī; however, they were forced to flee after the aforementioned Ibn Būyē's takeover. ʿAlī b. Khalaf then fled via

assumed to have found a son of Neṭīra, Abraham b. Isaac b. Neṭīrā, in a Geniza letter: TS AS 146.30, thinking that it was in the handwriting of Abraham ha-Kohen, author of panegyrics preserved in the Geniza; however, that letter was written by a certain Abraham b. Isaac. The writer survived a shipwreck while traveling in the company of a Maghribi; all his belongings were lost, even his garments. It is a letter asking for aid, and Scheiber's assumption is unfounded; there were a lot of people called Abraham b. Isaac. An endeavor to discover an offspring of Joseph b. Pinḥās can be seen in reference to an Arab-Muslim writ of sale from Damascus: on 20 July 922, al-Husayn b. ʿUbayd buys a plot of land in the village of Ḥaradān, in the *ghawṭa* of Damascus, from the Jew Ibrāhīm b. Pinḥās b. Joseph, for 85 1/3 dinars; see J. Sourdel-Thomine et D. Sourdel, *JESHO*, 8 (1965), 167ff.; *ibid.*, 182f., they assumed that the names Abraham and Pinḥās are sufficient for identifying him as a relative (perhaps a brother) of the famous money changer Joseph b. Pinḥās; and in their footnotes: Ashtor, *AESC*, 27 (1972), 187.

the sea, from Ahwāz, to Baṣra (October-November 934). Al-Hamadānī adds that Ibn Muqla had ʿAlī b. Khalaf b. Tayyār(?) imprisoned (in 935) when ʿAlī arrived in Baghdad. At first he was fined 300,000 dinars, but they reached a compromise on 100,000. It appears that all of them, Tanāb and the others, were only corruptions of ʿImrān, i.e., these are the descendants of Aaron b. ʿAmram.

Al-Ṣulī, who lived at the time of these events, has more information about ʿAlī b. Khalaf in the following years. Bajkam, the Turkish commander (adjutant of Ibn Rāʾiq, the chief commander of the Abbasid army), appointed ʿAlī b. Khalaf as *kātib*, i.e., head official, in Wāsiṭ, in March 938. Bajkam concentrated his forces in that city when he retreated before the forces, slowly advancing westward, of the Būyids. According to Ibn al-Athīr, had Bajkam been successful, with the assistance of ʿAlī b. Khalaf, to rout ʿAlī b. Būyē from the area of Fāris, it was agreed that Bajkam would be appointed governor there, and ʿAlī b. Khalaf would be appointed over the *kharāj*. For the time being, ʿAlī b. Khalaf managed to put his hands on the Wāsiṭ area taxes. In these events, mentioned for the first time is also Ibrahīm (Abū Ishāq), ʿAlī's brother. Bajkam was indeed successful. He conspired against his master Ibn Rāʾiq, succeeded in routing him from Baghdad, and seized control of the city in the autumn of that year, 938. In that year, apparently when the struggle between the two Turks was raging, the city of Baghdad was in an uproar because of a scandal: the Jewish representative of the Jew ʿAlī b. Khalaf was caught with a Muslim woman, and the chief of police whipped him in the presence of his master, ʿAlī, on a Friday. ʿAlī did not rest until he managed to bring about the lashing of that chief of police in the presence of the Jews of Baghdad (according to Ibn al-Jawzī). ʿAlī b. Khalaf, himself, later, at the beginning of 939, suffered for his support of Bajkam, when Ibn Rāʾiq's supporters raided his house on the western side of the Tigris, near the bridge, also raiding the house of his brother, Abraham, looting them, and also taking the property (or money) of Bajkam that they found there.

The exalted position of the two Jewish brothers, ʿAlī and Abraham, came to an end a short time later. According to al-Ṣulī, Bajkam set them a fine of a million dirhams (according to Ibn Miskawaih, the fine was 50,000 dinars, and was only set on ʿAlī). The order came from the caliph, al-Rādī, and the new vizier, Bajkam's protégé, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Shīrẓād, seized ʿAlī b. Khalaf into his charge, but only managed to squeeze a small sum out of him. ʿAlī tried to muster funds from the sale of wheat and barley from the taxes that he had received from faraway places, but could not find a buyer. He was accused of embezzling money collected when he was *kātib* in Mosul (1,000,000 dinars were reported, but it may have been: dirhams). The brothers were therefore left in jail, and in the end ʿAlī b. Khalaf was executed at Bajkam's order. Al-Hamadānī adds that he still owed 60,000 dinars, and that his house, that had previously belonged to Ibrahīm b. Aḥmad al-Mādharaʾī (a prominent Baghdad family, with a high status later, in Egypt), was confiscated. This was a house built on the bank of the Tigris, between the river and the Ṣarāh canal (i.e., in the heart of the Jewish area of Baghdad), with an adjacent orchard (*bustān*) belonging to Abūʾl-Shīrāzī and the house of (the *sharīf*) al-Murtadā (of the descendants of ʿAlī Ibn Abī Tālib); al-Hamadānī also reports that ʿAlī b.

Khalaf's execution took place in Wāsiṭ, where Bajkam was staying, and he was beaten with clubs until he died.

Al-Šulī has more information about the house on the bank of the Tigris—who had been living there and who had seized it afterwards—at one point referring to it as: the house of °Alī b. Hārūn b. °Allān (instead of: b. Hārūn b. °Imrān). This leads us to thinking about °Alī's identity. First of all we found that Khalaf was none other than Hārūn—something that we had previously also assumed. Secondly, here is confirmation regarding what we could also have assumed, that this is actually a person whose correct name was °Alī b. Hārūn (or: b. Khalaf) b. °Imrān, and that °Allān is nothing but a corruption of the correct name, °Imrān. Such errors are very common in early Arabic manuscripts, because many letters are so similar to others.

As to the information on °Alī's execution, it is apparently incorrect, because al-Šulī, himself, relates that in 942, °Alī b. Khalaf was active against Ibn Rā'iq, who was then struggling against the ruler of Egypt, the Ikhshīd, i.e., Muḥammad Ibn Tughj (the battle in Ramla). We also find him helping Nāṣir al-dawla, a Ḥamdānīd, ruler of northern Syria, who had appointed him in charge of the tax collection in northern Iraq and northern Syria (the areas of Ruhā, which is Edessa-Urfa, and Raqqa). He even reached Egypt, where the Ikhshīd threw him in jail, together with his brother Abraham (Ibrahīm); this is what al-Mas'ūdī, a contemporary of the events, wrote in 944, about the events of 942. What he says is confirmed by what the Spaniard Ibn Sa'īd writes, that after the Ikhshīd's death, Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Mādhara'i ordered to release (in the summer of 946) °Alī ibn Khalaf b. Ṭayyāb (perhaps it should be: Ṭannāb), i.e., the son of Aaron b. °Amram.

At the beginning of the eleventh century, Abū Ghālib Fakhr al-mulk was appointed vizier of the Būyids in Baghdad; According to Ibn al-Athīr, he was appointed in 401 (which began on 15 August 1010). His full name was Muḥammad b. °Alī Ibn Khalaf; his origin was in Wāsiṭ, and he was the son of a money changer (*ṣayrāfi*) who had become the representative of Bahā al-dawla, the Būyid ruler; he raised much money and invested it mainly in construction projects, including a splendid house for himself; he was executed in September 1016, after serving as vizier for four and a half years; his huge property was confiscated. Ibn Kathīr praises him for his piety and his many good deeds. According to Fiey, who had apparently used a Syriac source (without noting a reference), he had come from a family of Jewish 'bankers'; if this information is correct, then we may assume that Abū Ghālib, too, belonged to the sons of Aaron family, perhaps a fifth or sixth generation after Aaron b. °Amram. It appears that at a certain point the descendants, or some of them, converted to Islam.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁷ See Gil, *Sefunot*, NS 1(1979/80), 9ff.; apart from the fundamental change of view mentioned here, plus a few additional minor changes, my comments here correspond to what is said in a part of that article, 18-22. See Ibn Miskawaih, 211, 294, 298, 301 (on p. 211 a passage from the Arabic text was skipped, but it is extant in the translation, in vol. IV of the *Eclipse*, 236); on p. 294 there is a citation by the editor, from Ḥamadānī's *Takmila*, which is now edited, see p. 84. See in *El²* the entries Ibn Muḥla (by D. Sourdel) and also Buwayhids (by C. Cahen), especially p. 1350. The passage on the appointment of °Alī b. Khalaf was copied also by Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 225. See on contemporary

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(368) Whoever believes, even a bit, in the ability of ethnic-religious-social frameworks to exist continuously for generations, especially in antiquity and the Middle Ages, which were unparalleled times of preservation and conservatism, will recognize the prolonged existence, for countless generations, of the groups of Jewish merchants who dealt in international trade. The Geniza writings add another important link to the testimonies about this continuity; these are the letters and other documents giving evidence of the existence of large Jewish business houses dealing in international trade, in the Maghrib and Egypt, also in the eleventh century. The Babylonian-Persian origin of these traders is obvious both in their language, their fast ties with the leadership institutions of the Jews in Babylonia, the yeshivot and the exilarchs. These merchants left their residencies in the East because of the vicissitudes in the Abbasid state. In the eleventh century we still find these Jewish merchants dealing with the same goods hauled by their Rādhānite forefathers, especially textiles and luxury apparel, various kinds of perfumes, ornamental stones, but not slaves; except for the Tustaris, who also trafficked in slaves, as some facts that I will mention below show. Here it is proper to present statements of Goitein's: "not a single Jewish merchant from Europe appears in the Geniza writings of the eleventh century"; Jews

circumstances and events: Bowen, *Life*, 309-341. See the entries Ibn Rā'ik (by D. Sourdel), and Badjkam (by M. Canard), in *IEJ*. See al-Šūlī, 103, and cf. its translation by Canard, I, 169, and see *ibid.* also p. 68. Abraham 'Alī's brother: *al-ʿUyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq*, 166b; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 343. On the scandal see al-Šūlī, 108 and its translation (Canard), I, 176 (where he is incorrect, and see *ibid.*, n. 4). Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VI, 293. The looting: al-Šūlī, 119. The bridge: it is probably the *jisr al-yahūd*, 'the Jews' bridge, the northernmost one of the bridges on the Tigris. 'Alī's end: al-Šūlī, 129f., and its translation (Canard), I, 198, 200 n. 7. Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Hārūn b. 'Alī b. Yahyā al-Munajjim, the court poet, wrote a poem in honor of 'Alī b. Hārūn b. (!) Khalaf b. Ṭanāb, see Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, III, 203, and cf. on this poet the editor's note *ibid.*, and also Zarkashī, *ʿĪlām*, V, 183; Ibn Miškawaih, 409; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, VIII, 355; *al-ʿUyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq*, 176b (under AH 327, which began on 29 October 938). About the house: al-Šūlī, 147f., 199, 204, and its translation (Canard), I, 229ff.; Hamadānī, *Takmila*, 121. Banū'l-Mādhara'i, a family of Persian extraction, named after Mādhara'ya, a village north of Wāsiṭ; see Gottschalk, *Mādhara'ijjūn*, 23-27. In the above-mentioned manuscript of *al-ʿUyūn wa'l-ḥadā'iq*, at the place I mentioned, a peculiar example of the spelling of the name of Khalaf's father can be seen, without the discriminating dots; so also in Baybars, MS Bodl Hunt 198, fols. 148b, 149b. These and their derivations are undoubtedly transmutations of 'Imrān. The spelling 'Allān (instead of 'Imrān) won the confidence of Fischel, *MGWJ*, 81 (1937), 417f., who found here another image of a Jewish 'banker': 'Alī b. Aaron b. 'Allān. See also Fischel, *Jews*, 33 n. 1; and also Canard, in his translation of al-Šūlī, 229 n. 5 (about 150 years later there was indeed a Jewish financier, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm Ibn 'Allān; he was murdered in 1079, and is mentioned by Fischel, *ibid.*; see above, sec. 244). Pines, *PAAJR*, 24 (1955), 103f., imagined he found people related to Aaron b. 'Amram in a letter on philosophical matters, written by Bishr b. Sam'ān b. 'Ars b. 'Uthmān and Ibn Sa'd b. 'Uthmān b. Sa'd al-Mawsiṭī, both of them Jews, to Yahyā b. 'Adī. Their letter was received in May 952; the second of these two Jews is said to be a *ṣāḥib* of the sons of 'Imrān; according to Pines, the sons of Aaron b. 'Amram are meant, but all this is quite doubtful. See Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 65; IX, 224f.; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Mughrib*, 45; Ibn Khaldūn, *Ibar*, IV, 498, Fakhr al-mulk: Ibn al-Athīr, *ibid.*, IX, 224f.; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VII, 286; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, XII, 5; Busse, *Chalif*, 242f.; Fiey, *Chrétien* (1980), 187.

from France came to the East, he adds and summarizes, "as pilgrims, as refugees, or as seekers of charity, but not as merchants". We have seen something of the waves of emigration of Jewish merchants from Babylonia westwards (above, sec. 241).

Except for the emigration of the Rabbanite Jewish merchants from the areas of Persia and Babylonia westwards, there was also a Karaite emigration. One of its major components was the migration of Karaites to Palestine, which led to the establishment of Karaite communities in Jerusalem and Ramla. But the Karaites did not restrict themselves to Palestine; some settled in Damascus; they even reached Egypt and the Maghrib (including 'Andalus'—Spain). It appears that these two streams, of Rabbanite and Karaite Jewish merchants, were not only simultaneous, but, to a certain extent, also intermixed. In other words, some of the Jewish merchants were Karaites; true, the area spreading east of the Tigris was, until the mid-eighth century, the main base of the Rādhānite Jewish merchants, but it was also the base and center of sects that were different from the body of Rabbinical Judaism, and adopted gnostic-manichaean views. Mani, in the third century, and also Mazdaq, at the end of the fifth century, were natives of this area.

When dealing with the history and status of the Jews in the economic life of the Muslim world of the early Middle Ages, we encounter the family of the Tustaris, who filled a prominent role in this field, in Egypt. This is thus a different geographical environment than that of the Rādhānites and of the Baghdad Jewish financiers, who were definitely Babylonian. The time frame is also different, because the Tustaris belong to the eleventh century. As their nickname shows, they were from Tustar, in Khūzistan, and it appears that from there the family moved, in the tenth century, to Ah-wāz; they also had another base in the capital, Baghdad; in that city there was a quarter named for them, the Tustari quarter, on the western side of the Tigris, between the river and the Baṣra gate; there were also workshops in that quarter where 'Tustari' textiles were manufactured.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁸ Goitein on European Jewish merchants: *Tarbiz*, 36 (1966/7), 371. Many details on the Tustaris, including their participation in Jewish communal life in the Fatimid state (including Palestine), on their status in Egypt's political life, and their being part and parcel of the Karaites, can be found in my book *ha-Tustarim*. This chapter here is a repeat of the description of their share in the economic life, with additional details which I became aware of since the publication of that book. As to the matter of the killing of the Tustari brothers (*ha-Tustarim*, 41-43), there are the details from Maqrīzī, *Itiḥāz*, II, 209, that Heseḍ al-Tustarī (erroneously he is called Abū Naṣr Ibrāhīm there, which of course should be: Fadl) was imprisoned, having been accused of supporting Thimāl b. Ṣāliḥ b. Mirdās, when Thimāl violated his agreement with the Fatimids and attacked Hims; Heseḍ was killed in prison, after being tortured; according to this source, his arrest occurred in AH 441, which began on 5 June 1049; apparently he was killed in the beginning of the summer of 1050. In two letters written by Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrī, in Mahdiyya, on 27 July and on 21 October 1049, there is mention of business with Abū Naṣr, and most probably Heseḍ al-Tustarī is meant. Hence his killing did not happen in the summer of 1049, but in the summer of 1050, see 380, a, ll. 31, 33, 37; 381, a, ll. 9-11. As to his involvement in community life (Gil, *ha-Tustarim*, 44ff.), one has also to bear in mind the help offered by the brothers in sending letters from the Babylonian yeshivot to Fustat and further to Qayrawān—a matter mentioned in the letter of the sons of Berekhiah, 150, ll. 13ff. An abuse matter hinted at in a Geniza fragment is that of "the Tustari Gentlemen" (*al-shuyūkh al-dasātira*) in the matter of building the synagogue in Dumyāt (the fragment has: Tūmyāt); one may assume that the Tustaris were asked to help in obtaining the agreement of the authorities not to destroy the

(369) The world of research first learned of the Jewish Tustaris (there were also Muslim personalities, religious and legal scholars, with the same name), apparently about 125 years ago, when Baer and Strack published two colophons where Abraham b. Sahl, i.e., b. Yāshār al-Tustarī, whom I will mention below, is mentioned. In 1881, Harkavy, in his essay dealing with information from manuscripts that he had in St. Petersburg, mentions Sahl b. Faḍl al-Tustarī, i.e., Yāshār b. Ḥesed, one of the Karaite writers, and his Pentateuch commentary. In 1897, Margoliouth published Ibn al-Hittī's chronicle, which also mentions Yāshār b. Ḥesed al-Tustarī, and some of his treatises. Poznanski dealt with the issues of Yāshār b. Ḥesed, later, in 1907, and in 1917 he published the letter of Moses *ha-sōfēr* b. Isaac *he-hāvēr*, of the descendants of the Palestinian gaon, Aaron b. Meir, to Abū Sa'd Abraham al-Tustarī; (recognizing that the aforementioned Yāshār was the son of Ḥesed al-Tustarī, and based on a colophon in a *piyyūṭ* found among the Geniza writings), Poznanski showed that Abraham and Ḥesed were brothers, the sons of Yāshār (Sahl) al-Tustarī, and was the first, basing himself on Geniza documents, to elaborate on their status. In articles he published in 1920 and 1921, Poznanski returned to this subject, showing that Abraham was Yāshār b. Ḥesed's uncle, and proving there that the Tustaris were Karaites.

Regarding the Muslim sources about the Tustaris, students first became aware of them through Wüstenfeld's study of the Fatimids, published in 1881; in the same year the book by Nāṣir Khusraw, the Persian traveler who had visited Egypt, was published, including the story of the Tustari brothers that had taken place a few years before his visit to Egypt. Since then writers on the history of Fatimid Egypt, the most important of them, Lane-Poole, whose book on the history of Egypt was published in 1901, delved into these sources.

Mann first dealt with this issue in 1919, in an article arguing with Marmorstein, about Solomon b. Judah and his contemporaries. There, he proved that Solomon, grandfather of the (above) writer Moses *ha-sōfēr*, could not have been the Palestinian gaon, Ben Meir; to do this, Mann used the Arabic sources on the Tustari brothers that Wüstenfeld had gathered. Thereafter, Mann published in his books, printed in 1920-1922, and 1931, Geniza sources with more information about the Tustaris. In 1937, Fischel published his book about the Jews in the economic and political life in the medieval Muslim world, with a chapter on the Tustaris, where he

synagogue; see TS NS 226.25; the writer is Abraham b. Joseph b. Jacob, and there is mention of the *qāḍī* Ibn Ishaq. As to the fact that the Tustaris belonged to the Karaites (see above, sec. 164), one also has to consider the mention of Israel, the *dayyān* of Alexandria, b. Daniel, in Yefet b. Ṣāghūr; in a list of books donated to the Karaite synagogue in Damascus, there is mention of a "book of commandments", written in Sel. 1373, AD 1062, by this Israel, called al-Qūmisī (perhaps Daniel al-Qūmisī's offspring), "of the scholars of Dustar", meaning: of the Tustaris. See Pinsker, *Liqq. qadm.*, II, 174f.; see there on the criticism by the *dayyān* Israel, in a poem of his, against the "erring Pitōmian (meaning Saadia Gaon), he and Samuel son of Hophni", i.e., in fact against the Rabbinites. The quarter of the Tustaris in Baghdad, see: Yāqūt, *Buldān*, I, 850; cf. Serjeant, *AI*, 9 (1943), 25f., quoting a passage from Ibn al-Jawzī's book on the praise of Baghdad, with topographical details. See *ibid.*, 79, the assumed map of Baghdad in the late Middle Ages, with the presumed location of that quarter as well. (The discussion on the Tustaris as part of the Karaites can be seen above, sec. 164.)

summarized information from the Arab sources, also briefly mentioning information from Jewish sources, i.e., the Geniza sources that Mann published. It was a broad and precise summary, a first rate work. This summary was apt for its day, even though one could disagree with him here and there. After him, other Geniza documents came to light, as well as medieval Arabic books, with information about the Tustaris. Ben-Zvi, Goitein, Scheiber, and Stern, published more Geniza documents pertaining to this subject. Goitein dealt with the Tustaris in some of his articles, as well as in the volumes of his book on the Mediterranean society. In the collection of translations of commercial letters from the Geniza, that he published, there are translations of three letters to the three Tustaris of the 'first' generation (beginning of the eleventh century; these letters are printed in full in my collection).³⁶⁹

(370) It may be assumed that one branch of the Tustaris family remained in Ahwāz until the first quarter of the eleventh century. It may be that in the tenth century some members of the family emigrated from Baghdad's Tustari quarter, westwards and settled in Egypt, while others settled in Ahwāz. Their presence in Ahwāz is testified to by a letter from there, and also a Judaeo-Persian deed first published by Margoliouth. The family's final departure from Ahwāz may have occurred in AH 412, AD 1021/2, when rioting broke out in that region; Ibn Jawzī tells us, in his short biography of the vizier Ḥasan b. Maṣṣūr, i.e., Abū Ghālib, that in that year this vizier was murdered in Ahwāz, during the revolt of the Daylami battalions.

Geniza documents and Arab sources offer information on two generations of the Tustaris family. The first is the generation of the three brothers, Sahl, Joseph, and Sa'īd, sons of Israel. Details on them are found in Geniza documents only, until the 20s of the eleventh century. Roughly beginning from the 30s, we start meeting the other generation, the sons of Sahl b. Israel.

Mas'ūdī, who wrote in the tenth century, and died in 956 in Egypt (after much wandering), in his last book, has information about a certain Jew, Abraham al-Tustarī. He included Abraham al-Tustarī among a number of Jewish scholars that he mentions, including Saadia Gaon. According to him, he was among those who came over "to us" (certainly meaning: to Egypt) from *madīnat al-salām* (city of peace, i.e., Baghdad), and was very swift in matters of *naẓar* (a term with a number of meanings; here it

³⁶⁹ See Baer u. Strack, xxxiv; Harkavy, *ZAW*, 1 (1881), 158. Harkavy mentions there that fragments of the commentary are in the State Library in Petersburg. See Ibn al-Hifī, 435; Poznanski, *JQR*, 19 (1907), 70ff.; *idem*, *Schwarz Festschr.*, 476ff., where he edited the letter TS 13 J 16, f. 16, written by Moses the scribe to Abraham b. Sahl al-Tustarī, in about 1030; see it in Gil, *Palest.*, II, 412f. (no. 224); the colophon of the *piyyūt* was edited by Mann, *Jews*, II, 79; Bodl MS Heb d 65, f. 65. Also see Poznanski, *MGWJ*, 65 (1921), 134ff.; *idem*, *REJ*, 72 (1921), 204; Wüstenfeld, *Gesch.*, III, 1, 4; Nāṣir Khusraw, 55; Lane-Poole, *Hist.*, 137-148; Mann, *JQR*, NS 9 (1919), 410; *idem*, *Jews*, especially I, 76ff.; *Texts*, I, 371-385; Fischel, *Jews*, 68-89; Ben Zvi, *Zion*, 3 (1937/8), 179ff.; Goitein, *Zion*, 17 (1952), 136-140, where he edited TS 20.113, which is part of the letter no. 577, in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 445-455; Scheiber, *Tarbiz*, 32 (1962/3), 402f., where he edited DK 123, which is part of no. 254, in Gil, *ibid.*, II, 459-461. Also see Scheiber, *AO* (Hung.), 16 (1963), 102f.; Stern, *REJ*, 128 (1969), 214ff., where he edited TS Ar. 30.278 and Bodl MS Heb b 18, f. 21, which together are no. 197, in Gil, *ibid.*, II, 347-355. More detailed references will be found in the continuation of this discussion.

appears to be: civil laws). One cannot determine whether this one was a member of that Tustari family, or perhaps someone from the Tustari quarter of Baghdad, or from Tustar itself. This Abraham came to Egypt, writes Mas^cūdī, after the year 300, i.e., AD 912/3, and it appears that when Mas^cūdī arrived in Egypt he found him there, and that he already had a solid position.³⁷⁰

(371) The earliest source, according to the chronological order, about the three Tustari brothers of the first generation, is a letter regarding a monetary transfer, written to the brothers by a certain b. Solomon, from Āmūl in Ṭabaristān, being about 80 when he wrote the letter. He sent 150 dinars (*darkemōnīm*, in his parlance) with Solomon b. Aaron the Baghdadi, of these 100 to Damascus to a certain Šedāqā b. ʿAmram, who was supposed to transfer the money to the Tustari brothers, and 50 to Sahlawayh b. Ḥayyim, a relative of the Tustaris, who lived in Fustat. Mentioned there are the three Tustari brothers, i.e., Abū'l-Faḍl, Abū Ya^cqūb and Abū Sahl, who are Sahl, Joseph and Saʿīd, the sons of Israel b. Jacob, "who are from the city of Shushtar". The writer had embarked on a long journey, from Ṭabaristān to Baghdad, from there to Takrīt, then to Ḥalab, and from there to Damascus; when in Damascus he heard an evil rumor about the Tustaris and about Damascus. He was accompanied on his journey by a nephew of the Tustaris, Abū'l-Ṭayyib Ṭōv b. David. The writer had set out from Baghdad in AM (4)371, in the month of Siwan (we must interpret this date as *anno mundi*, for if we say that 371 was a *hijra* year, we come to the AD 982, which is too early. If we say the Seleucid era, we arrive at the year 1060, which is too late; therefore, it is AM 4371, AD 1011. The evil rumors about Damascus and the Tustaris are apparently connected to the persecutions of the Fatimid caliph, al-Ḥākim, or perhaps the bedouin revolts that took place that year.

The following document, in chronological order, is a letter to the three Tustari brothers, that was apparently sent from Alexandria. The writer is Abū Zikrī Judah b. Simḥa, one of the greatest merchants in Qayrawān. The time of the letter: about 1015. Abū'l-Khayr Mūsā b. Barhūn (Moses b. Abraham) al-Ṭāhīrtī, was about to bring them a pouch of coins with 150 and-a-half dinars and a *ḥabba*, in gold, apparently to redeem merchandise that had been sent to Alexandria. We get the clear impression from this letter, that the Jewish merchants constituted a tight group, rendering services to each other. This group included Rabbanites and Karaites, among them also Abū'l-Faraj Joseph b. Jacob b. ʿAwkal. We may assume that the social and economic ties between them had been maintained for generations, beginning in their lands of origin, Babylonia and Persia, from where they migrated westwards, some of them to Egypt and others to the Maghrib. The Tustaris held a place of honor in that group, even though, as it would seem, they were relatively newcomers in their new land of residence, Egypt.

³⁷⁰ The letter from Ahwāz: 178. The deed: Bodl MS Heb b 12, f. 24, in Margoliouth, *JQR*, 11 (1899), 671, and see the discussion on it: Asmussen, *AO* (Copenh.), 29 (1965), 50f.; Mackenzie, *JRAS* 1966, 69; Shaked, *JOS*, 1 (1971), 180ff.; the riots in Khūzistān: Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VIII, 3; see this information also in Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, IX, 323, who adds that the rebellion was crushed by Abū Kālījār, the son of the Būyid Sulṭān al-dawla; cf. Busse, *Chalif*, 91-95; see Mas^cūdī, *Tanbih*, 114.

The above Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī and his brother Isaac write at about the same time, i.e., circa 1015, from Qayrawān apparently, to the three Tustari brothers, with whom they had extensive export-import business dealings, in which Abū Zikrī Judah b. Joseph, the writer of the previous letter, also participated. Mentioned in the letter are also the three sons of Sahl al-Tustarī, who are Abū Saʿd Abraham, Abū Naṣr Ḥesed and Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron, who are our second generation of Tustaris.

We have a deed, written in Judaeo-Persian, drawn up in Hürmshīr (i.e., Ahwāz) on 1 Shevat, Sel. 1332, AD 1021. Hannah daughter of Israel b. Jacob, the Tustaris' sister, received, in exchange for jewelry her husband had unlawfully taken from her (his name was apparently David, father of Tōv, see above in this section) together with a certain Daniel b. Reuben, the sum of 25 dinars. That jewelry was the common property of hers and her three brothers, Sahl, Joseph, and Saʿīd. Hürmshīr is, as mentioned, nothing else but Ahwāz (above, sec. 300), thus we have clear evidence that in 1021, which as we have seen was a year of riots in Ahwāz, some of the family was still there.

From about that time, around 1020, a fragment of a letter sent to the head of the yeshiva in Jerusalem, apparently Josiah Gaon, has been preserved with a complaint about a woman named Mubāraka, who had appealed, with the assistance of others, to the gentile courts in matters of divorce. Among the five signatories we find Joseph b. Israel al-Dustarī, "of blessed memory". This document is important also regarding the question of the participation of Karaites, and the Tustaris were Karaites, in matters of law and *halākhā* under the authority of the Palestinian gaon. If all of the complaint's signatories, and Mubāraka herself, were Karaites, then here is proof that the Palestinian gaon also dealt with the legal affairs of the Karaites, because in the eyes of the authorities he was considered to be responsible for Jewish affairs in the Fatimid caliphate, including also the Karaites; for it was expected of him that he issue a ban on Mubāraka, even intercede with the authorities in this issue. He is asked to do something that "would bring him closer to his Rock"—a clear paraphrase of the Muslim term, *qurba*, proximity (to God), i.e., good deeds, pious ways.

Ephraim b. Saʿīd (Saadia) b. Malachi b. Ephraim, who was apparently a kind of agent of the Tustaris in Ahwāz, writes them on 4 March 1026. It appears that the entire Tustari family was then in Fustat. The writer dealt with the family's import-export business, and with their property, that had remained in Ahwāz, especially with two stores that they had there. They had almost been sold for a paltry sum, yet the Tustaris had wanted that sale, for, as implied, they rebuked the writer for not bringing the transaction to a close. In order to delay the sale (because he did not know what the Tustaris wanted) the above Ephraim claimed that the stores belonged to Abū Ṭayyib, who is apparently Tōv b. David, the son of the sister mentioned above, of the first generation Tustaris. The addressee portion of the letter has the names of the three brothers and their *kunyas*, except for the third brother, Saʿīd, who is mentioned only by his *kunya*, Abū Sahl.

The writer of the letter, Ephraim b. Saʿīd, whom the Tustaris trusted, may have been the father of Saadia *alūf* b. Ephraim, a Babylonian community activist in Fustat, the uncle of Sahlān b. Abraham (his mother's brother; above, sec. 112). Perhaps it is this Ephraim b. Saʿīd whom an

anonymous writer is addressing, saying, among other things: "I have heard that you enjoy a high status with the Tustaris, and as a matter of course, also with Sahlān *he-hāvēr*.... and I have heard that you are traveling to Halab....". This is some proof of the tie between the two families, the Tustaris and the sons of Sahlān (the sons of Sanbāt), which may have been strengthened also by ties of marriage.

Another Geniza document, which has been preserved in three separate fragments, one in Cambridge and two in New York, is a court document, in the handwriting of Ephraim *he-hāvēr* b. Shemariah, leader of the 'Palestinians' in Fustat, regarding an inheritance. It is about monies that were deposited with Sahl, Joseph, and Saadia (i.e., Sa'īd), sons of Israel al-Tustarī. This *bēt dīn* document was apparently written in the wake of an appeal of the Palestinian gaon to the Tustari brothers, to release the deceased's monies and transfer them to his three sons.

A letter from the Jerusalem yeshiva, written at the end of 1042, by Tūvia b. Daniel and the gaon Solomon ha-Kohen b. Joseph, apparently to Ephraim b. Shemariah in Fustat, mentions blessings uttered in Jerusalem, among others, for "the important and distinguished elders whose names are: our Lord and Master Shela (=Sahl) and our Lord and Master Saadia and our Lord and Master Joseph, may God preserve them, the sons of our Lord and Master Israel, who are known as al-Dasātira.... may their reward (from God) grow and increase".

It appears that Saadia b. Israel al-Tustari lived to a ripe old age after Abraham and Hesed, his brother's sons, were killed, more of which below. So it is implied in a dirge in memory of the two brothers, which says: "a letter arrived from Zoan (i.e., Fustat), in the name of a man called Hesed, to his uncle Saadia, sending greetings to the elders, beginning: woe, and alas....". From this it may be understood that Hesed the Tustari managed to inform his uncle, Saadia, about the tragedies striking the family. Saadia b. Israel, in that year, i.e., at the end of the 40s, was apparently in Jerusalem. It is he who is meant by the gaon, Solomon b. Judah, in a letter, written for him by the gaon's son, Abraham, in around 1026, apparently to Abraham b. Sahlān. The gaon mentions there Saadia b. Israel's house in Jerusalem, which is open to all. The gaon, Solomon b. Judah, even asks this Saadia to act as protector for the *nāsī* (apparently: someone in the exilarchic dynasty close to the Karaites) and for this purpose write to Egypt, apparently, to his highly influential brother's son, "the glory of our princes, our minister (*sālār*, Persian) the elder of the House of Israel and glory of the House of Israel", i.e., Abraham b. Sahl. It seems, therefore, that Saadia the Tustari resided in Jerusalem for a generation, from about 1020 to 1050. Preserved in the Geniza is an *abizariya* (a deed of receipt) drawn up in Fustat, where a certain b. Yeshū'ā b. Abraham confirms that he had received whatever was coming to him from Sa'īd (i.e., Saadia) b. Israel al-Tustarī.³⁷¹

³⁷¹ See the letter 127, and see on the events of those times: Gil, *Hist.*, 370-385. Judah b. Joseph's letter: 154; the deed from Hürmshūr (Ahwāz), see the previous note; on Sahlawayh b. Hayyim, see Gil, *ha-Tustarīm*, 60 n. 88, where one should correct: instead of TS 16.261, it should be: TS 12.621. The matter of Mubāraka: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 74f. (no. 44). The letter of Mūsā and Isaac, sons of Barhūn: 128. Ephraim b. Sa'īd: 178. The letter of the anonymus: TS 8 J 28, f.5, ll. 18-19, 21-22; the inheritance: Gil, *ibid.*, II, 602ff. (no. 329), with more references. The letter from the yeshiva in Jerusalem: Gil, *ibid.*, 78-81 (no. 47). The dirge on

(372) The Muslim sources which mention the Tustaris are mainly interested in their involvement in Fatimid policy. Nevertheless, they mention that they were great merchants, holders and activators of capital, deposits holders and suppliers of expensive luxury goods to the Fatimid court. Here is what Maqrīzī says about it:

In the days of al-Hākīm, two Jewish brothers achieved greatness: one of them dealt with merchandise and the other with money exchange and marketing import merchandise from Iraq. Their names were Abū Saʿd Ibrāhīm, and Abū Naṣr Hārūn, sons of Sahl al-Tustarī. They became famous for marketing, and promptly paying the secret deposits of merchants, near and far. Therefore, they were famous in all the countries and grew from strength to strenght, until the caliph, al-Zāhir li-īʿzāz dīn Allah (February 1021-June 1036), accepted Ibrāhīm b. Sahl al-Tustarī into his service, to be in charge of the purchasing of luxury goods, etc.

This reconciles with the statements of the Persian traveler, Nāṣir Khusraw, who visited Egypt in the mid-eleventh century, who also emphasizes the fact that Abū Saʿīd (i.e., Abū Saʿd, as it should be read) Abraham al-Tustarī was a *jawharī*, i.e., a dealer in precious stones.

The most direct and authentic testimony about the Tustaris' economic activity, is, of course, in the Geniza. If we compare their activity to that of other merchants of the eleventh century, it appears to have been similar, but stood out in three areas: (a) sea hauling on a larger scale than usual; (b) export ties with the Abbasid areas; (c) dealing with large sums of money and the transfer of money and holding of deposits.

The trade in jewellery was apparently carried out mainly to satiate the rulers' appetites. Maqrīzī tells us that Ibrāhīm b. Sahl acquired for the caliph al-Mustanṣir, in 1044, a model of a ship (*ushshārī*, a type of ship used for Nile sailing), made of silver, whose weight was 130,000 dirhams (about 400 kilograms) and that cost him 2,400 dinars. We also know from the Arabic sources that Abraham al-Tustarī was in charge of purchasing the rulers' expensive saddles, that were kept in *khazā'in al-surūj* (the saddles storehouses). In 1076, the Turkish battalions seized these storehouses and looted 5,000 saddles, each one of which cost between 1,000 and 7,000 dinars.

In about 1045, there is a letter by Khalfa b. Isaac b. Menahem, writing from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim, regarding a large deal in *kharaz*, beads, for Ḥesed al-Tustarī.³⁷²

the murder of the two brothers: Bodl MS Heb d 65, f.40 (as it should be), in Mann, *Jews*, II, 79f. The letter of Abraham, the son of the gaon: Gil, *ibid.*, II, 111f. (no. 64). The deed of receipt: TS 16.160, ed. Mann, *Texts*, I, 380-382.

³⁷² See Fischel, *Jews*, 72-78, for details about the economic activity of the Tustaris according to Muslim sources. See Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, II, 279. In Maqrīzī the names are garbled, as they are in other Muslim sources as well, since Abū Naṣr's name was Ḥesed, which is Faḍl in Arabic, not Aaron. Hārūn, Aaron, was the name of the third brother, Abū Maṣṣūr. Also the name of Abraham al-Tustarī is garbled: sometimes it is said that his father's name was Aaron, instead of Sahl, and his *kunya* is sometimes Abū Saʿīd instead of Abū Saʿd. See Nāṣir Khusraw, 55. The *ushshārī*: Maqrīzī, *ibid.*, 325 (who calls Abraham: Abū Sahl al-Tustarī); *idem*, *Itfāz*, II, 293; cf. Lane-Poole, *Hist.*, 148; Udovitch, in: *Individualism etc.*, 68f., n. 19. The saddles: Ibn al-Zubayr, 257; Maqrīzī, *Itfāz*, II, 289. Khalfa b. Isaac: 560, cf. Goitein, *Letters*, 146f.

(373) It appears that the Tustari family had considerable influence in flax trade, the most important contemporary export item of Egypt. A fragment of a letter, written apparently by someone in the Tustari family at the beginning of the eleventh century, has information about the purchase of a shipment of flax from the Qālūs (the flax trade center in Fustat) for the Tustaris. We find an echo of large flax dealings in the letter of Ṣedāqā b. °Ayyāsh to Ḥesed al-Tustarī, with details of huge shipments of flax that the Tustaris sent via sea to Sicily and to North Africa via Alexandria: 54 loads (it should be assumed of: 150 kilograms each) were sent to Qayrawān, and about 30 to Sicily. Mentioned in this letter are 10 ships carrying goods of the Tustaris. Due to political and military interruptions, there was a delay in the shipment to Qayrawān, but the market in Sicily was apparently capable of absorbing any additional quantity whose shipment to North Africa was delayed. The Tustaris had unbridled control of the flax trade. Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī writes from Mahdiyya to Nehorai b. Nissim, in about 1045, at the beginning of Nehorai's dwelling in Egypt, about whether to operate in Būšīr, the most important flax center of Egypt; he warns Nehorai that he will need the protection and support of Abū Naṣr, i.e., Ḥesed al-Tustarī. The writer, a cousin of Nehorai on one side, and linked to the Tustari dealings on the other, had already approached the Tustari about it. He warns Nehorai about even traveling to Būšīr without first getting a letter of recommendation from the Tustari, who was also asked to help in financing his dealings there. The Tustaris' commercial ties with the Maghrib, via Mahdiyya, are also implied in a letter of °Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā, writing from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim, on 4 August 1045. Mentioned there is a letter that had arrived from Mahdiyya for Abū Naṣr Ḥesed al-Tustarī, and two pouches of coins, certainly payments for flax shipments.

The letters at our disposal also inform us that the Tustaris, in addition to flax export, traded in a variety of textiles as well. Among them were *siqlatūn*, *dabīqī*, *thawb °attābī*, rough fabrics (*khīsh*, *qaṣab*), *ḫrāz*; fabrics of the kind of *thawb rāzī*; *thawb m°uallam*, *thawb mu°arraj*; dyed fabrics and also ready-made clothing items, such as *īzār* (prayer shawl), *ḥulla*, *mishaffa*, *maqnā'a*, *marīsh*, *sarfīj*, *ḥilūla*. Aside from these, there is evidence in the letters about the Tustaris also dealing in the trade of perfume, spices, and dying materials. Israel b. Nathan, who was staying in Alexandria, informs Nehorai, in about 1045, that he was entering into deals with the Tustaris, and that he had bought a shipment of indigo from Ḥesed al-Tustarī, who was so preoccupied that he did not have time to prepare the invoice. In another letter that he wrote from Fustat to Qayrawān, to Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī, apparently after Abraham b. Yāshār al-Tustarī was killed, Israel b. Nathan mentions ties with Abū'l-Ḥasan b. Ḥayyim, the scribe of the other brother, Ḥesed b. Yāshār. He seeks confirmation from Ḥesed for a headdress that he had sent him. Ṣedāqā b. °Ayyāsh writes to Ḥesed al-Tustarī about the loading of four loads of pepper meant to be shipped by sea from Alexandria to Qayrawān, in addition to shipments that had been sent on two ships that had already sailed. Clearly, the goods had first been brought from the Far East, apparently from India, to Egypt, and from there they were exported to other Mediterranean countries; this, more than anything else, may symbolize the central role of Egypt in international trade in this period. After Abraham and Ḥesed, the Tustaris, were killed,

their younger brother, Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron, maintained the business, and we find in a 1058 accounts list of Neḥorai b. Nissim, that he had purchased 350 *raḥls* of lacquer from this Aaron.³⁷³

(374) In light of this widespread scope of business dealings, and the considerable experience that had certainly accrued to the Tustaris over many generations, it is no wonder that the Maghribi merchants sought to have their sons enter into their service, both to establish ties with them and to learn the secrets of the trade; this we find out from a passage in a letter of the Tāhīrtī brothers to the three first generation Tustari brothers.

The ties with the Tāhīrtīs were maintained also in the following generation. Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī was carrying out purchases for Abū Naṣr, i.e., Ḥesed al-Tustarī, in the Maghrib; this trade concerned silk for sale in Egypt, in exchange for which flax was to be bought. On 27 July 1049, already after Abraham al-Tustarī had been killed, Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī continued to write to the Maghrib about transactions with the Tustaris. Barhūn's cousin, Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, as well, writing from the Maghrib to his brother, Barhūn, in Fustat, in 1057, still mentions transactions with the Tustaris, certainly with the surviving brother, Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron; trade was carried on with them in sea shells and pepper. Mardūkh b. Mūsā, one of the most important merchants in Neḥorai b. Nissim's circle, in one of his letters, mentions having sent fish from Alexandria to Abū Sa'd, i.e., Abraham b. Yāshār al-Tustarī—certainly a personal gift; some misunderstanding had arisen or some kind of mishap regarding this shipment, and there were complaints about which Mardūkh expresses regret. In another letter, as well, Mardūkh writes about Abū Sa'd al-Tustarī, asking Neḥorai b. Nissim to: "kiss the hand of the Lord Abū Sa'd in my name"; while in Fustat, Mardūkh intended to pay a visit to the Tustari, but at precisely that time the people of the *amīr* (certainly a Turkish commander) were there and his entry was blocked, while when writing his letter he could not travel again to Fustat to meet with the aforementioned, because there was no one with whom his children could stay, yet he intends to go there as soon as he can. We also receive information about the Tustaris' ties with the Qayrawān merchants, the sons of Zakariyyā.

These commercial ties were intertwined with financial ties, mainly the holding of deposits and dealing with money transfer via money orders. We have seen that regarding this issue the Geniza documents confirm what is in Maqrīzī, and we have also seen the case of the Jew from Āmūl, b. Solomon, traveling from the East to Egypt, who mentions that he had deposited 150 dinars with the Tustaris, and that he was being helped by money orders (*suftača*, in his parlance, as in the Persian source of the term,

³⁷³ Flax from the Qālūs for the Tustaris: 138, l. 17; Ṣedāqā b. ʿAyyāsh: 158, a, ll. 6-17 and margin. Barhūn b. Isaac: 377; money from Mahdiyya: 476, a, l. 6; b, l. 2; *siqlāʿūn*: 128, a, l. 24; b, ll. 1-2; *dabīqī*: 178, a, l. 23; b, l. 2; *khazz*: 158, a, l. 17; b, l. 1; 178, a, ll. 11-12; *ʿatābī* and other sorts of clothes: 178, a, ll. 9, 12, 23; b, l. 1; 128, a, ll. 11, 17-24, 28-29, and margin; sorts of clothing and parts of garments: *ibid.*, a, ll. 10, 28, and margin; 178, a, ll. 23-24; b, ll. 1, 2; *ḥūlūla*: 284, c, l. 9; Israel b. Nathan and the indigo: 408, a, ll. 7-8, and margin; 409, a, l. 10; right margin ll. 4-7; in my article in *Michael*, 7 (1982), 247, I wrote that this letter was intended for Abraham b. Isaac ha-Talmīd, but I now see that it was written to Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī. Pepper: 158, a, ll. 18-21; *ahlilaj* (myrobalan), lacquer, *ibid.*, b, l. 7; lacquer from Aaron al-Tustarī: 282, d.

and not *suftaja*, its Arabic form). Implied in this letter is that the Tustaris had representatives and agents also in Ḥalab and Damascus, which the writer passed through.

Fischel did not know the Geniza documents regarding this subject, he nevertheless correctly estimated the nature of the Tustaris' activity in the financial sphere; he rightly assumed that these were not just simple monetary exchange transactions, but also deposits, letters of credit, and the like, also payments for goods supplied by merchants in Iraq and other countries to the Tustaris. These payments were not necessarily made in cash, but often in payment orders from different deposits held by the Tustaris.

The Geniza documents indeed contain a number of clear proofs about deposits people placed with the Tustaris. These were not just monetary deposits, but also different kinds of merchandise and valuables turned over to them for safekeeping. A letter of a certain Moses b. Yefet, from Malīj, in Egypt, to Ephraim b. Shemariah, deals with the affairs of a man by the name of Abraham b. ʿAllūn, who died in Malīj the week before the letter was written, and who left an orphan, a boy by the name of ʿAllūn. In his will, he appointed his wife, the mother of the child, as the guardian of the son and his entire inheritance. Among the property he left was a crate full of merchandise kept by *adastara* (= *al-dasātira*), i.e., the Tustaris. Ephraim is asked for assistance in its transfer to the widow.

A Tiberian, Joseph b. Asad al-Ṭabarānī, placed property with Ḥesed al-Tustarī. His brother's daughter, Rayyisa daughter of Maṣṣūr, who was in Malīj, in AM 4807 (1047), i.e., three years before Ḥesed was murdered, writes a deed of attorney to her brother, Asad b. Maṣṣūr, that he go to Fustat in order to receive the deposit from "my elderly great Lord, the distinguished prince, his excellency, the great holy Lord and Master Ḥesed.... son of his excellency, the great and holy Lord and Master Yāshār". That property was the *qushṭ*, i.e., her dowry. The deed has the seal of "Sahlān *seḡan* of the yeshiva son of Abraham, *beḥūr* (the chosen) of the yeshiva", the leader of the 'Babylonian' community in Fustat.

Two letters from Tyre, apparently written in the early 1040s, deal with the bequest of Ḥalfon (i.e., Khalaf) b. Taʿlab, one of the richest people in Tyre, who is mentioned in a number of letters in the Geniza. His sons-in-law were Ṣedāqā b. Ezra and Ḥalfon ha-Levi, "*pāqīd* (representative) of the merchants" in Tyre, son of Yefet. Ṣedāqā was appointed attorney for assembling the properties specified in the will, which also included "a gilded cloak" that was deposited with "the glorious elder his excellency the holy Lord and Master Abraham, may our God protect him, known as Abū Saʿd, may our Rock support him, known as al-Tustarī, son of his excellency the holy Lord and Master Sahl, of blessed memory". The first letter, of which only a fragment has remained, was written by Joseph ha-Kohen *he-ḥāvēr* b. Jacob, who was *dayyān* in Tyre; the other one was written by Samuel *he-ḥāvēr ha-meʿullē* b. Moses *he-ḥāvēr*, who had inherited the former's post. This entire preserved letter is addressed to Ephraim b. Shemariah (we may assume that the first was also addressed to

him). Stated in this letter is that Abraham al-Tustarī was about to sell the guided cloak and divide the deposit between the two inheriting sisters.³⁷⁴

(375) There are a number of testimonies in the Geniza documents regarding the collection of deposits that were with the Tustari brothers after Abraham and Ḥesed were murdered. These documents generally refer to the third brother, Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron b. Yāshār al-Tustarī. This brother had apparently been miraculously saved from the fate of the two other brothers, who were apparently older than he; it appears that unlike them, Aaron was not involved with the rulers. A fragment of a calendar preserved in the Geniza contains a note referring to 2 Ramaḍān 441 (1 February 1050): "Abū Maṣṣūr b. al-Tustarī was released from prison". Several Geniza documents concern claims against him. There is a deed of receipt drawn up at the court of Sahlān b. Abraham, in the mid-eleventh century. Khalaf b. Aaron al-Bayḍānī, of Ramla, releases Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron b. Yāshār and the heirs of Faḍl b. Yāshār (Aaron's brother, Ḥesed), from a debt of 39 and one-half dinars that Aaron the father of Khalaf had deposited with Ḥesed al-Tustarī. Khalaf confirms that he had received the money from Aaron al-Tustarī. A deed drawn up on 29 March 1052, contains a power of attorney given by David b. 'Ammār b. 'Izrūn, of Palermo, to Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, to collect what was due to the heirs of his father, 'Ammār, from the bequest of Ḥesed al-Tustarī; the debt (certainly a deposit) should be collected from Abū Maṣṣūr, i.e., Aaron al-Tustarī, brother of Abū Naṣr Ḥesed b. Yāshār al-Dustarī, *qaddasa'llāhu rūḥahu*, may God sanctify his soul (a Muslim blessing formula for the departed).

Shortly after Ḥesed al-Tustarī was killed, in the summer of 1050, 'Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā, of Alexandria, writes to Barhūn and Nissim, the sons of Isaac al-Tāhīrtī, mentioning *mā jarā 'alā'l-dasātira*, the tragedy that had befallen the Tustaris; further along it says that with Abū'l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Raḥmān the jeweler, merchandise (certainly jewelry) remained for the Tustaris, and that the writer was trying, unsuccessfully, to persuade him to ship it to the two brothers, the sons of Isaac al-Tāhīrtī.

In two letters from Alexandria, written a few years later, around 1060, by 'Awād b. Ḥananel b. Nissim, one of Nehorai b. Nissim's people, there is mention of monies that the Tustaris still owed Nehorai. 'Awād writes that Aaron al-Tustarī—who, it is implied, was in Alexandria—claiming penury, was not paying his debt. 'Awād remonstrated with him, he was even preparing to lodge a complaint with the *qāḍī*, but some people intervened

³⁷⁴ The letter of the Tāhīrtis: 128, a, ll. 13-14. The trade relations with the Tustarīs are mentioned also in the letter of Judah b. Joseph, 154. Barhūn b. Isaac: 377, lines 122ff.; in another letter he suggests to Nehorai b. Nissim that he endeavor to gain the confidence of Ḥesed al-Tustarī, and, when he reckons that he has achieved this, he asks him to hand over to him, i.e. Nehorai, the confirmation of his having acquired eight loads of flax ordered by Barhūn from the Tustarī; concomitantly he also does business with the other brother, Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron al-Tustarī; see 378, a, ll. 10-12; b., l. 1. Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī: 364, b, l. 8. The Tustarīs had trade relations also with 'Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā and with his son, Ṣedāqā b. 'Ayyāsh, the relatives of Nehorai b. Nissim, see above, sec. 373, and see also 484, a, ll. 20-21. Mardūkh b. Mūsā: 530, a, l. 24; 532, b, ll. 2ff.; 1049: 380, a, lines 31, 33, 37; the sons of Zakariyyā: 178, a, ll. 8-11; the son of Solomon: 127. See Fischel, *Jews*, 72f.; see TS 13 J 13, f.1, and see the details of the properties that should be retrieved, as from line 10. The letter is mentioned by Goitein, *Med Soc.*, III, 501 n. 85; the deed of attorney: TS 24.73, ed. Assaf, *Yerushalayim*, 1953, 115ff.; the letters from Tyre: see Gil, *Palest.*, II, 493-496 (nos. 277, 278), with more references.

requesting that he not now pressure Aaron, but wait until Aaron had earned some profits; if it transpires that he did gain profits, he hoped to extract from him some of his debt. In the same matter, i.e., getting the monies due to Nehorai b. Nissim by the Tustaris, there were also the efforts of another of Nehorai's people, Ephraim b. Nissim, writing about it from Alexandria, with the knowledge of Nehorai's brother-in-law *al-seġullat* ("the unique one"—of the yeshiva), i.e., Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy. This Ephraim also wrote that he had an argument with Aaron al-Tustarī, demanding that he return the monies, but he did not succeed in getting them.

A glance into the deposit transactions of the Tustaris is possible thanks to two Geniza letters, on the verso of which various huge sums are recorded, in the cursive script of Barhūn b. Moses al-Tāhīrtī, Nehorai b. Nissim's cousin. Recorded there are sums with al-Yāzūriyān (=the two Yāzūris), namely the vizier Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. °Alī b. °Abd al-Rahmān al-Yāzūrī (appointed to his post on 1 June 1051, and executed in March 1058) and his son; with Abū Zikrī (whom we cannot identify); with the daughter of Bābshād; with Abū Sa'd (Abraham al-Tustarī?); with Ibn al-Ḥalabī; with Karaites and Rabbanites (apparently with the heads of the communities). Also listed are the numbers of slaves (5,000?) and maidservants. About Ibn Ḥayyim (apparently: Sahlawayh, a relative of the Tustaris) it states that he was holding 500 dinars from the time of al-Ḥākim (the caliph), i.e., from before 1020, more than 30 years. Other large sums of money are in "the house next to the house of al-Raqqī" (*dār al-raqqī*) in the Michael lane (*zuqāq Mikhīl*[!]), at the bathhouse of al-Qāhira (which was separate from Fustat) and at the 'al-Māliḥa' bathhouse. Three houses are mentioned in two courtyards that belonged to Abū Sa'd (Abraham al-Tustarī?). The recorded sums are huge, millions of dinars, alongside which were sums of thousands of dinars, which may be installment payments, or monthly allotments. The two letters where these sums are written on their verso, were sent from Jerusalem, to Isaac b. Jacob *he-ḥāvēr*. This was apparently the son of the Ḥalab *ḥāvēr*, Jacob b. Joseph, who might have been the Ibn al-Ḥalabī listed in the aforementioned list of deposits; but there is no room here for a definite decision regarding the nature of these deposits; though the possibility that these were deposits that were with the Tustaris and their associates and recorded after the two brothers, Abraham and Ḥesed, were killed, should not be ruled out.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ The fragment of the calendar: TS K 2.107, which is in the same handwriting as the fragments which I edited: Gil, *ha-Tustarīm*, 86-94, and see also *ibid.*, 62f.; the deed of acquittance: TS 16.145, cf. Mann, *Texts*, I, 376-379; David b. °Ammār: 649. The original of this deed of attorney had been written in Mahdiyya, and apparently what we have before us is a copy made in Fustat; cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 183. °Ayyāsh b. Šedāqā: 484, a, ll. 20ff.; °Awād b. Ḥananel: 567, a, top margin, continued in b; 568, b, ll. 1-4. Ephraim b. Nissim: 712, ll. 4-5; see the two letters in which sums are listed: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 114-119 (nos. 463, 464), cf. Goitein, *ha-Yishshūv*, 205-218 and see there his comments about these sums; possibly "a thousand thousand" (*elef elef*) in those lists does not mean a million, as I supposed here, but instead means: a thousand and another thousand; even so, these are huge sums.

4. *The Jewish merchants in the ninth and the tenth centuries;
the migration to Egypt in the eleventh century*

(376) The following is an attempt to retrieve information from the ancient commercial letters in my collection. The earliest of these letters, written on papyrus, were—so it would seem—from the mid-ninth century; most of the following letters belong to the eleventh century. The end of that century is the time of the first crusade; it was preceded by other momentous events, especially the Turcoman conquest of large parts of the eastern Muslim world and the Norman conquest of Sicily. Thus, the twelfth century documents already represent a new reality: the centers of international trade move in new directions; moreover, in the groups of merchants, we encounter only a few personalities and families from the documents in my collection, and the reason why our discussion comes to its conclusion with the end of the eleventh century, is therefore self-understood.

The papyrus letters apparently belong to Jewish merchants of the original Jewish community of Egypt, in contradistinction from most of the other letters, belonging to the eleventh century, virtually all of whose writers were Maghribis, originally of Babylonian and Persian extraction. There is a letter by Ḥusayn b. Suwayd to his partner, Isaac b. Ṣedāqā. Ḥusayn was in Ashmūn (in the Ṣaʿīd, southern Egypt), i.e., he was absent from Fustat, and the addressee did not handle his business affairs as he should; he was especially disappointed that he had sent him neither the shipment of crushed wheat (*dashīsh*) or the sum of 10 dinars, as they had agreed; we already encounter the term *muʿāmala*—a partnership based on mutual service in the purchase of merchandise, its shipment and marketing—that we find characteristic and common among the Maghribi merchants of the eleventh century.

Further down, there is a letter coming from the opposite direction, written by Isaac b. Ṣedāqā to Ḥusayn b. Suwayd; the letter was apparently written in Fustat, and the issue is textile merchandise: coats and shawls, including also of the *shāhjānī* kind. There is another letter, written by another merchant, Jacob b. Joseph, to his partner Ibn Shuqayr. This too pertains to trade in clothing, including apparently expensive clothes, silk clothes (*dībāj*), and *shāhjānī*; and also trade in flax. Mentioned are pouches of coins containing gold dinars. A number of people are also mentioned: ʿAyyāsh b. Abraham; Mūsā b. ʿAlī b. Ṭarasūn, the father of a family which we encounter among the Fustat community figures, “the sons of Ṭarasūn”, in the eleventh century; Joseph b. Isaac Ṣādōq, who was perhaps the son of the gaon of Sura, Isaac Ṣādōq (810-812; above, sec. 202). Thus about 150 years before the generations of Maghribi merchants that we will encounter below, there is most authentic evidence of groups of Jews in the trade that the later among them will also be dealing with: flax, finished textile goods, wheat, all in mutual business partnership and service.

Already two years before the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, there is evidence of the presence of Maghribi Jewish merchants and their activity in Egypt. On 23 May 963, a deed of a loan (of which only a fragment has been preserved) was written, for the sum of 600 “silvers known as *niqār*” (i.e., *nuqra*, dirhams with a standard quantity of silver); Isaac b. Abraham *ha-maʿarāvī* (the westerner, i.e., the Maghribi) receives this loan from

David ha-Kohen b. Solomon to deal with crystal in Fustat, on the condition that he will return this money in Qayrawān. The lender, David ha-Kohen, sends merchandise to the Maghrib, including 12 *mann* (=24 *raḥls*, a bit more than 10 kilograms) of *jawziyya* (a nut sweet?) which belong to Isaac b. Abraham.³⁷⁶

(377) Under the Fatimids, the Maghrib drew many immigrants from Babylonia; we have seen (above, secs. 137, 140) the matter of the exilarch, °Uqbā, who found refuge in Qayrawān, at the beginning of the tenth century, apparently only a short time after the Fatimid conquest of Ifrīqiya; also, the statements of Ibn Ḥawqal about the people of Iraq, merchants whose origins were in Baṣra, Kūfa, and Baghdad, who lived in North Africa. There is no doubt that the waves of repeated immigration from Iraq in the tenth century brought many Jewish merchants to North Africa—something which was occasionally noted, as we have seen, by the Arab chroniclers. These Jewish merchants are the very people who developed Qayrawān and turned the port city of al-Mahdiyya into the center of international trade in the Mediterranean Basin. The Fatimid conquest of Egypt, in the summer of 969, led to a gradual shift of this main focus, from North Africa to Egypt, in the wake of the central government, especially after May 973, when the caliph, al-Mu°izz, established his seat in Egypt.

People of Persian origin, who were part of the merchants, and their families, who first emigrated from the east to Ifrīqiya, and from there to Egypt, were Joseph ha-Kohen b. Yazdād (a Persian name) and his son, Mevorakh, who are mentioned in a deed of attorney of AM 4765, AD 1005.

It appears that, in general, the Fatimid regime, both in the Maghrib and in Egypt, was benevolent towards the protected people, it certainly encouraged the Jewish merchants who would develop a flourishing economy. There was indeed a contradiction between this and the information about the first Fatimid rulers, who, when conquering Sijlmāssa, murdered the rich ones among the Jews, confiscated their property, and forced the Jews who wished to remain, to be builders and sanitation workers.

When the central regime left the area, the central Maghrib, Ifrīqiya, became the scene of frequent internal wars, which, naturally, caused great hardship to the Jewish population. The weakness of the central government encouraged also the aggressive policies of the other Mediterranean power, Byzantium; there were repeated Byzantine attacks on merchant shipping. Isma°il b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī, writing from the Maghrib, probably from Mahdiyya, to Joseph Ibn °Awkal in Fustat, in the summer of 1011, mentions Ḥammād, rival of the Qayrawān rulers, and the deteriorating security situation, and describes much killing, robbing and torching, and

³⁷⁶ Ḥusayn b. Suwayd: 102, and, in continuation, 103, 104; see more papyri edited by Blau and Hopkins, *JSAI*, 9 (1987), 87ff. Ashmūn (also: Ashmūnayn) is Hermopolis Magna, see Hartmann, *ZDMG*, 70 (1916), 18 n. 6; it is mentioned in letters from the eleventh century, see the index in vol. IV of my *Be-malkhūt*; in 732b it is clearly implied that it was a center of flax growing and marketing. Cf. also Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, II, 533 n. 55; Ashmūnayn is in the Delta, close to Dumyāt (which is Damietta), see Golb, *JNES*, 33 (1974), 118; cf. Maqrīzī, *Khīṭaṭ*, I, 419, with details and traditions on its history, and see also Labib, 310, 312, who notes that Ashmūnayn was a center of textile production, located in a flax growing region. Shāh-jānī, see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 146 (no. 472, l. 8, and see the note there). See on the sons of the Ṭarasūn family: Bareket, *Shafīr*, 139-143; the deed of the loan: 105.

the danger of a Byzantine invasion. This situation would continue until 1017, and similar events would also occur for 40 more years. Thus there was a dual reason for the emigration of Jewish merchants from the Maghrib to Egypt: the passage towards the new capital of the Fatimids, as well as the persecutions and lack of security that gradually developed during the rule of the Zīrī dynasty, masters of Qayrawān.

In the 1040s there was a letter from Israel b. Nathan, Nehorai b. Nissim's cousin. Israel was already residing in Egypt, while Nehorai was still in Qayrawān with his mother and sister, along with Isma'īl b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī; this, therefore, was the typical situation, when merchant families began migrating to Egypt, with some members of the families acting as pioneers. A short time later, we find Nehorai, too, already in Fustat; he writes to Qayrawān expressing concern for his family, and along with a shipment of silk, he also sends his family *qirqa*, sandals or shoes, as well as a jar of camphor water. Israel b. Joseph b. Bānūqa writes in about 1040, to the financier Manasseh b. David, in Fustat. It is clear from the letter that Manasseh was one of the pioneers of the move (in that time) from the Maghrib to Egypt; Manasseh's son was still in Qayrawān, as was Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph, 'the *rav*', who would become the spiritual leader of the Maghribis in Fustat. Sometimes pressure was even applied on family members to hurry up and leave Qayrawān; thus, for example, Ḥasūn b. Isaac al-Khawlanī, in his brief letter (*tadhkira*): he is in Egypt (apparently in Alexandria), and was not writing to his sister, Banīna, because he swore not to write to her until she left "that country"; his meaning is clear: until she comes (presumably, also with her family) to Egypt from the Maghrib. Those already in Fustat maintain communication via letters with their family members still in Qayrawān, whether for business issues and participating in the trade being conducted by a family member in Fustat, or for family matters. The letters from the Maghrib reach Alexandria, and whoever is there makes sure to inform those in Fustat that a letter has arrived for them. Typical is also a letter from a woman, of the Tāhirtī family, writing from the Maghrib to another woman, a relative of Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī in Fustat; she mentions the marriage of another woman of the family, Mawlāt, noting that she herself was staying with Sittāt, also a daughter of the Tāhirtī family. Another part of the family was already in Fustat, and on the address it is already written: "*dār al-Tāhirtī*" (=al-Tāhirtī). A similar reality is reflected in the letter of another woman in the Tāhirtī family, daughter of Barhūn b. Isma'īl, writing to her brother Isma'īl, from Mahdiyya; some members of the family were still in Mahdiyya, including also the daughters of the brother, the addressee, Najīyya and Mawlāt. Najīyya was already married, and Mawlāt had become engaged, in the father's absence. Isma'īl's brother, Ṣāliḥ, fathered a daughter who was given the name of Surūra, and there is also more information about members of the family still in the Maghrib.

By now going back to the first letters at our disposal, we find the protocol of a testimony recorded in Qayrawān, in AD 978. This record pertains to the bequest of Isaac b. Abraham ha-Ma'arāvī (=Maghribi) mentioned in the previous paragraph, who had by now died. Before his death, this Isaac deposited 120 *raṭls* of *nīl shāmī*, i.e. Palestinian indigo, with a Fustat merchant, Qīmōy b. al-Ḥasan, who had sent the shipment to

Qayrawān and it had arrived. Involved in this were the people appointed guardians of Isaac's bequest—Judah b. Qāyōmā, and a certain b. Isaac al-Majjānī. The goods were transported by Nissim b. Zikrī b. al-Muḥāra. Abraham b. Kabīr, who was apparently the liaison of Qīmōy b. Ḥasan, the holder of the deposit in Fustat, received confirmation for Qīmōy that the merchandise had indeed been received in Qayrawān. One should note the typical Babylonian names: Qāyōmā and Qīmōy.³⁷⁷

5. *The Ibn ʿAwkal family*

(378) The most prominent Egyptian merchants in the first third of the eleventh century, are a father and son, Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, and his son, Joseph. Judging by their ramified ties and close acquaintance with the merchants in the Maghrib, it is highly likely that they too hailed from there. A letter written by Joseph b. Labrāt al-Fāsī to Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, contains greetings: "the group of our Fās people sends you greetings", something which at least hints at the Fās origins of the family, from where they migrated to Fustat. The earlier origins were undoubtedly Babylonia, or Persia. The name, ʿAwkal, appears to be Aramaic. ʿUkhlā (for the Babylonians, also: Ukhlā) was a utensil used by flax launderers. Another possible meaning is: a hammer; and another: the name of a measurement.

As for the Ibn ʿAwkal family, we know, as stated, the name of the father, Jacob b. Joseph. Ten letters from his archive that was found in the Geniza, are addressed to him; his son, Abū'l-Faraj Joseph, worked with his father in the commercial business, and many more of the letters written to him have been preserved, a total of 62. Conspicuous is the fact that no letters written by themselves have been preserved, the obvious reason being that their letters were sent out of Fustat, and, unlike other merchants, they apparently did not usually retain a copy of their letters.

As to the other members of the family: Abū Ṭayyib (also: Abū Naṣr) Benjamin, was apparently the eldest of Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal's sons; Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī writes him a letter about commerce with Sicily, in about 1025. In the letters of members of the Tāhīrtī family, from Qayrawān, to Joseph b. ʿAwkal, in August 1008, another son aside from Benjamin is mentioned, Abū'l-Faḍl Hillēl. In the letter of an agent, the addressee of which is unknown, the writer says that he had received two payment orders

³⁷⁷ B. Yazdād: TS 12.150, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 400 n. 2; Friedman, *Marriage*, II, 363; the Fatimids in Sijilmāssa: *Istibṣār*, 200; al-Bakrī, *al-Maghrib*, 149; Ḥimyarī, *Rawḍ*, 306 (and see garbled versions of the additional professions besides builders and I assume that the original version was كناسون [sweepers or dustmen]). The letter of Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn: 122, ll. 11ff.; see on the events and on the wars between Ḥammād and al-Muʿizz b. Bādīs: Marçais, *Berbérie*, 163ff.; Idris, *Berbérie*, 153ff. Israel b. Nathan: 408, a, margin; b, ll. 1-2; Nehorai: 243b; see also 273, c. l. 16, of 1046: Nehorai's mother is still in Qayrawān; also 754, a letter from Qayrawān to Nehorai, in about 1050, a. l. 6: Nehorai's poor mother awaits his letters; with her also is "the older Barhūn" (*al-kabīr*) al-Tāhīrtī, still in Qayrawān. The letter of Israel b. Joseph: 232. Ḥasūn b. Isaac: 219, ll. 25-26. See also 165, a letter from Isaac b. Abraham, from Fustat, to his son in Qayrawān; the father expects the arrival of another son, ʿImrān, who is on his way to Fustat. A letter arrived from the Maghrib to Alexandria: see for instance 260, a, lines 3-4, where Nehorai, while still in Alexandria, informs Joseph b. ʿAlī Kohen Fāsī, that a letter arrived for him, from the Maghrib. The woman's letter: 161; Barhūn's daughter: 160; the deposit of Isaac b. Abraham: 106.

from Abū Saʿīd Ibn ʿAwkal; we are not certain whose the *kunya* Abū Saʿīd is; it may be that of a brother of Joseph; as to the *kunyas* of Jacob and his son Joseph: we are not certain of Jacob's *kunya*, but it may have been Abū'l-Bishr, if we decide—and it appears likely—that the bill for marketing goods in Qayrawān for Abū'l-Bishr was meant for Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal. Joseph, as mentioned, was called Abū'l-Faraj; yet we sometimes see that he was called Abū Yaʿqūb, the accepted *kunya* for someone by the name of Joseph. A Libyan Tripoli man, Joseph b. Jacob, writing from Qābis to Joseph b. Jacob b. ʿAwkal, only mentions Hillēl b. Jacob in his letter, with there no longer being a mention of Benjamin. Hillel's son, Jacob, is mentioned in the *ketubbā* of a Karaite woman, Karīma daughter of Abraham.

We do not have many details about the personalities of Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal and his son Joseph. From the letters of the people who were their business partners, it is obvious that the writers related to them very respectfully, and that they also knew that the people they were dealing with were strict and difficult. Joseph b. Berekhiah, writing to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, includes a highly significant sentence in his letter: (they know) “that in your heart of hearts, you are good”, which should be interpreted as meaning that the Ibn ʿAwkals knew very well how to conceal their goodheartedness. We also find expressions of personal loyalty towards them and greetings, such as in the letter of Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī, written apparently to Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, where he also asks for instructions regarding trade, but also that he inform him “whether he is sitting in a store, God willing, and if he is relaxed, for it will make me very happy”; and further down: “by God, for this reason I have taken a fast and charity upon myself for the day in which I learn that you are relaxing peacefully in one place”.

There is also Joseph's daughter, Bahya (“the pretty one”); she gives her maidservant Nujaym (above, sec. 338) a gift. By then Bahya was the widow of Mawhūb ha-Kohen b. Maṣṣūr b. Wahn b. Qurayza. It is interesting that the Ibn ʿAwkals married into this family, a priestly family going back to a certain Qurayza, which apparently seeks to emphasize the al-Madīna, or perhaps Khaybar origins of the family, thereby raising positive associations, through this connection (apparently imaginary) with the time of the Prophet of Islam; the release from the poll tax may have been one of the purposes for so doing. It appears that Mubārak b. Wahn, of Fustat, who settled in Tiberias and may have been the brother of Maṣṣūr, Mawhūb's father, was also a member of this family; Mubārak calls himself *aṭabīb* (= *al-ṭabīb*) *ibn al-khaybarī* (the physician, son of al-Khaybarī).

Another descendant of the Ibn ʿAwkal family, the memory of whom has been preserved, was Yefet b. Khalaf Ibn ʿAwkal, mentioned in an act of court in Alexandria, on 12 April 1076; there he declares that he owed 14 dinars to Yefet b. Yeshūʿā b. Qasāsā, and promises to pay him one dinar a month; if he does not live up to the obligation he will pay a fine of five dinars “for the poor”, i.e., the *heqdēsh* (pious foundation) in Alexandria.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁸ For earlier students, the knowledge about Jacob b. ʿAwkal and his son Joseph was quite modest; even the correct name was unknown, so in Mann, *Texts*, I, 114, the father is mentioned as b. ʿAubal; the correct name became known only after the publication by Goitein of a whole group of letters written to them and which were preserved in the Geniza, see his articles in *Tarbīz*, 34 (1964/5), 162ff.; 36 (1966/7), 366ff.; 37 (1967/8), 48ff., 158ff.;

(379) There was a great variety and an abundance of goods among those that the sons of ʿAwkal handled. Especially prominent was the merchandise imported into Egypt, from the Maghrib and Sicily, that would arrive in Alexandria and from there be transshipped to Fustat. There is, for example, a detailing of such goods in a letter sent by Abraham b. Joseph al-Ṣabbāgh, of Alexandria: *kuḥl* (eye powder), tin, soap, copper, gallnuts, textiles, wax, and tar. In the summer of 1011, Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrī lists silver, cords, kinds of silk, wool, purple dye, peppers, and mentioned regarding these goods is Sardūnish, a place near Qayrawān. Joseph b. Jacob al-Itṛābulūsī, in his letter from Qābis to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, mentions flax, wax (which the government appropriated, but for a high price of 19-21 dinars a *qintār*), hides, cheap silk (*lāsīn*), standard silk (*ḥarīr*), belts (*mayāzīr*), and sheets of parchment (packed in jars), lead (which had not yet been unloaded, apparently because the rulers wanted it); the writer was also supposed to receive the *khazz* silk that he had in Fustat; all of these are goods that Ibn ʿAwkal was shipping to the Maghrib. Other letters also contain information about the goods that I have listed. Also mentioned is packing cloth (*khīsh*); cumin (*karawīyya*, cultivated cumin), being sent from the Maghrib; especially large consignments of flax, 146 loads in all (about 13 tons), are mentioned in a letter from Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī; they were sent to Mahdiyya and Sicily. This Ephraim, in others of his letters, in addition to the goods that I have already mentioned, also mentions *zaʿfarān*, saffron; also mentioned is ʿūd (aloes), that Ibn ʿAwkal's agent, Maymūn b. Ephraim, did not succeed in selling in Alexandria and had decided to transship to Mahdiyya and Sicily; cinammon and other spices are also mentioned; it appears that Ibn ʿAwkal also traded in precious stones, because his stay in *dār al-jawhar*, the "jewelry house" in Fustat, is mentioned in the address of the letter, thus it appears that he was there frequently. Isaac Ibn Janūn, writing to Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, expresses his anger at Farajūn, i.e., Faraj, a manumitted slave, Ibn ʿAwkal's business

38 (1968/9), 18ff.; see also Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 93f. (n. 38); also the articles of Stillman: *JESHO*, 16 (1973), 15ff.; *REJ*, 132 (1973), 529ff. The Persian extraction of the family is hinted at in a Geniza fragment, TS Arabic 42.176, where part of the address is still preserved: ... بالفسطاط الى يعقوب بن يوسف بن عوكل ويوسف بن يعقوب ... followed by a mixture of Arabic and Persian in Hebrew script, where an understanding of even a part of it is impossible because of the manuscript's condition. A tool of flax fullers: *awkalā de-qaṣṣārē* is mentioned in BT *Shabbāt*, 123b; it seems adequate for a family whose main occupation was—so it seems—the flax trade. Cf. Epstein, *Simonsen Festschr.*, 290ff., and see MS Harkavy R 64 no. 5, in Assaf, *Resp.*, (1929), 106: "... you should know that ʿ*awkalā* in the Aramaic language means a hammer, and the gaon adds that since the Babylonians "pronounce the ʿ*ayn* as if it were an *aleph*, they say *awkalā*, as we find also in the Talmud". A measure: see the ʿ*Arūkh*, in the entry ʿ*kl*, cf. Buber, *Grätz Jub. Vol.*, 16, and editor's note B. Letters to Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal: 33, 34, 107-114, to his son Joseph 117, 119, 122, 129-132, 142, 144-152, 162-164, 166-172, 174-177, 179-203, 206-208, 214-216. The letter to Benjamin b. Moses: 118. Mention of Benjamin and Hillel: 130, 131, and in many more letters, see the index in vol. IV of my *Be-malkhūt*. Benjamin is also called Abū Naṣr, perhaps erroneously: 118; Abī'l-Bishr: 114; Joseph is called: Abū Yaʿqūb: 111b; only Benjamin mentioned: 172; Jacob b. Hillel b. Joseph b. Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal: Bodl MS Heb b 12, f. 31, l. 14; the letter of the sons of Berekhiah: 144, a, l. 16. Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī: 113, b, ll. 7-8. Bahya: 224, and see on the family which settled in Tiberias: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 450-452 (no. 247), and there on p. 452, in the verso of the letter, instead of al-Ṭabarī it should be al-Khaybarī, but the translation there is correct. The act of court in Alexandria: 844.

assistant, regarding shipments of honey, wax, textiles, or clothing, of the *mulḥam* kind (apparently: textiles with a silk warp and other kinds of threads in the woof), a container for packing (including *jawāliq*, large corn sacks) and a consignment of Damascene paper. Qūrl (=Cyril), a slave of Greek or Byzantine origin carried the wax. Another of the goods, mentioned in a bill of about 1038, drawn up by Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, is the *sukk*—perfume balls, that were imported via Alexandria.³⁷⁹

(380) In the chapter on the yeshivot, I have already mentioned the ties between Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal and his son Joseph, and the Babylonian yeshivot, and their role in the transfer of funds to the yeshivot from the Maghrib and Egypt, as well as their role in transmitting queries and responsa. We saw that thanks to this activity of theirs, as well as the direct support that arrived at the yeshivot, the two of them were honored with the titles of *alūf* and *rōsh kallā*. Thus Hayy Gaon, when he notes that he received a letter from Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal in the summer of 1006: (the letter of) “our delight and joy of our hearts and our great one and friend, my Lord and Master Joseph son of my Lord and Master Jacob *alūf* b. ʿAwkal, may our Sacred One keep him alive and give him strength and protect him, and may the memory of his father (i.e., Joseph, Jacob’s father) be blessed”. That is, in that year, 1006, Joseph had still not received the title of *rōsh kallā*, or of *alūf*, but his father Jacob was called *alūf*. However, in February 1007, Hayy Gaon already mentions the letter of “the delight of our eyes Abū’l-Faraj (i.e., Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal) *alūf*”.

Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal’s ties with the *nagid* of Qayrawān, Abraham b. ʿAṭā’, and with Nissim b. Jacob should be noted; we find both of them writing letters to him that deal mainly with the problems of transmitting, through him, queries and responsa, as well as money-transfer problems. Abraham b. ʿAṭā’ mentions that Ibn ʿAwkal also transmitted books and quires, and

³⁷⁹ The letter of Abraham b. Joseph: 207; Sardūnish: see Bakrī, *Maghrib*, 32, who says it is a place called Sardāniya, and see Slane’s note in his translation *ibid.*, 70; apparently, a colony of Christians who were captured in Sardinia was located there; cf. Idris, *Berbérie*, II, 431: west of Qayrawān, which was also a beautiful and renowned place of recreation; also sugar cane was grown there, marketed by Ibn ʿAwkal, see 115: collecting a debt on behalf of Ibn ʿAwkal; the debtor lives in Fustat in *darb al-wahl*, “the slough street”, located in the area of the sugar refineries and trade, around *sūq wardān*, see Ibn Duqmāq, 26: المطابخ السكريين; Joseph b. Jacob: 169; *khīsh*: see: 174, from 18 July 1026, containing a confirmation about the arrival of silver shipped to Alexandria; 175, of 11 March 1027, with a description of the hardships in marketing flax in Qayrawān, and information on buying oil in the Maghrib and its storage before transporting it; cumin: 176, l. 34, cf. Zohary, *ʿŌlam ha-sem.*, 307; Maimonides, *Sharḥ*, 97: it is the Armenian cumin, and some say it is the cardamom, which Meyerhof denies, defining it as *Carum Carvi* L. (of the umbelliferae); 179 (flax, oil, lead, from Sicily): huge transports of flax: 180, ll. 20-21; saffron: 181 l. 30; 182, margin; 183, margin; in 183 there is also mention of hides, see l. 7; aloes: 188, ll. 13-14; cinnamon and other spices: 203, l. 15; *dār al-jawhar*: 222, the letter of Farah b. Abraham, probably from Qayrawān; see on this house: Casanova, *Essai*, I, 25f. and see there, 26, a sketch of the houses and streets in that neighborhood; there was also the *sūq al-ghazl* (“yarn market”) and *dār al-zaʿfarān* (“house of saffron”); it was the area between the ʿAmr mosque and the Mahra quarter; cf. Stillman, *JESHO*, 16 (1973), 18 n. 4. *Dār al-jawhar* is mentioned in more letters in my collection, see the index in vol. IV of my *Be-malkhūt*. In 551, a, ll. 10, 11, there is mention of work on sea-shells, and in 328, b, l. 3, the trade in shells is mentioned. *Sukk*: 357, a, line 7 (see the note there); b, l. 10; apparently, it was based on musk. See Ibn al-Bayṭār (Sontheimer), II, 38f.; Isaac b. Janūn: 111; see on *mulḥam*: Serjeant, *AI*, 10 (1943), 113. See more on some goods marketed by the Ibn ʿAwkal family, in 208, a letter from Abraham b. Joseph al-Ṣabbāgh to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal.

Jacob b. Nissim notes similar matters regarding the father, Jacob b. ʿAwkal, at around the year 1000. Joseph b. Labrāt al-Fāsī, writing to Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, warmly recommends a man named Abū Yaʿqūb Joseph b. Abraham b. Saphos, who was also carrying—from Qayrawān to Baghdad, as it would seem—goods, especially silk goods, but also letters for the yeshivot.

The Jewish communities under Fatimid rule, both in Egypt and in Palestine and Syria, would turn to the Ibn ʿAwkals, seeking their intercession with the authorities. Such a request for intercession has been preserved in a letter from a community (the name of which has not been preserved, it may have been in Palestine), regarding the local ruler, Maṣṣūr b. Rashīq, and an unclear matter of 95 dinars; the community asks Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal to intermeditate with Maṣṣūr for them, so that he protect them from a certain Yūḥannā (definitely a Christian name) regarding taxes—this apparently had to do with tax collection; the local Jews, the writer of the letter claims, could only pay one dinar as poll tax. The ties the Ibn ʿAwkals had with the Palestinian yeshiva and the Jews of Jerusalem, which I have dealt with elsewhere, should also be borne in mind.³⁸⁰

(381) The Ibn ʿAwkals were at the center of a group of merchants, some of them their partners, and other agents, distinguishing between the two is difficult. There are many names of people who wrote letters to them, or that were mentioned regarding different business dealings, both Egyptians and Maghribis. Thus, for example, writes Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī, a member of the group, on 16 February 1000, from Fustat (which he had visited for business purposes when he came from the Maghrib) to Yeshūʿa b. Ismaʿīl al-Maghribī, who was in Rashīd, the transit port for goods sent to the Maghrib. At issue is a letter about the shipment of goods on the Nile for export to the Maghrib, to Mahdiyya. Mentioned there are Abū ʿAlī Ḥusayn b. Yahyā, Abū Zikrī Judah b. Sughmār, and Abū ʿl-Faḍl Zikrī b. Khallūf al-

³⁸⁰ Hayy Gaon: 37, ll. 13-15. The letter of Jacob b. Nissim: 36; Nissim b. Jacob: 162; Abraham b. ʿAṭā: 163, 164. In most of their letters, the agents and partners do not call Jacob or Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal by the title *rōsh kallā* or *alūf*. In about 1008 Samuel Gaon b. Hophni mentions "Joseph b. Jacob *alūf*" (i.e. the father is the one called *alūf*), see 52, b, l. 7; Joseph b. Labrāt calls Jacob: *ra's al-kull*, see 109, l. 29; so also Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī, at the beginning of 1011, writes in the address: "Joseph b. Jacob *ra's al-kull*", see 117, b; an anonymous writer, apparently from Jerusalem, writes in the beginning of his letter: Joseph *rōsh kallā* and *alūf*, 197, l. 4; Isaiah b. Isaac, writing in about 1010, mentions *al-alūf* Abī ʿl-Faraj (i.e., Joseph) b. ʿAwkal, see 210, a, l. 15. Joseph b. Abraham b. Saphos: 108. The request for intercession: 206, cf. Abramson, *Bamerkazim*, 94 n. 38. Abū Maṣṣūr Rashīq is perhaps the brother-in-law of the vizier Jacob Ibn Killis, Rashīq al-ʿAzīzī, commander of the Fatimid army who headed the campaign against the Bedouin in Palestine in 982, see Gil, *Hist.*, 342, 358f., and *ibid.*, 528, 606 (both refer to 148), 536 (on his efforts to procure monies in Fustat for the Jerusalem synagogue), 602 (the appeal for Jerusalem), 674 (letters of the gaon Solomon b. Judah to Ibn ʿAwkal). ENA 4009, f. 4, is a letter of request to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, written in biblical Hebrew, and some of it in Arabic script; the writer asks for aid, and it seems that he is interested in obtaining accommodation in *ḥabs dār al-anmāt*, perhaps one of the houses belonging to the *heqdesh* (pious foundations) in Fustat. Joseph is called there "Joseph, elder of the Diaspora... b. Jacob *rōsh kallā*, may his soul be kept in the gathering of (eternal) life". That house, *dār al-anmāt*, is mentioned by Maqrīzī, *Khitaṭ*, II, 368, 380; III, 242; it was close to the Nile, near *al-shārʿ al-a-ʿzam* (the largest road, or the main one); *al-anmāt* are felt products; that house was probably the center of trade in these goods; it was adjacent to the mosque of ʿAmr. See also Ibn Duqmāq, 7, 8, 12, 14, 28, 36, 50, 83, 95; cf. Casanova, 35-37.

Ashqar. A partner, or agent, of Ibn ʿAwkal's, Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī, writing from Alexandria to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, mentions those who were dealing with his merchandise: Zurʿa, Khallūf b. Zechariah al-Ashqar (his father, Abū'l-Faql, was mentioned in the previous letter), Farah b. Sulaymān al-Qābisī, Salāma b. al-Ghazzāl, and another unidentified person, a Rūmī, i.e., from some Christian country. Joseph b. Yeshūʿā, an Alexandrine, as well, also writes to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal; he was working for Joseph in Alexandria and, among other things, dealt with a shipment of pouches of money that had apparently arrived from the Maghrib, or from Sicily, with people who had come by ship; also mentioned is Hārūn b. Joseph al-Ghazzāl, brother of the aforementioned Salāma. Mūsā b. Ishaq b. Hisdā, apparently a partner of the Ibn ʿAwkals, who used their money, defends himself in his letter against the harsh accusations raised by Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, that he had deviated from the instructions; Mūsā claimed that the guilty parties were a certain Joseph and his coterie who are inciting Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal; he bitterly complains that he has remained without the living expenses that Ibn ʿAwkal was supposed to supply him. There is also an expense account presented to Ibn ʿAwkal by one of his agents, after he dealt with 11-and-a-half loads of flax. Regarding this matter, there is also mention of Ibn ʿAwkal's partner, Abū'l-Ḥayy. The latter's son, Salāma b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, writes to Ibn ʿAwkal, among other things: "for I am like your son"; he had some large business deals in partnership with Ibn ʿAwkal, had laid out over 1,000 dinars, and complains that he has not seen any profit. Among other things, Ibn ʿAwkal instructed him not to pay for anything without getting two confirming receipts, one in Hebrew, the other in Arabic. Simḥūn b. David b. al-Siqillī, i.e., a Sicilian, writes in his letter about Ibn ʿAwkal's resentment at him for having shipped *baqam*, brazilwood, to Spain contrary to his instructions. For that reason Ibn ʿAwkal even held back money that the Sicilian was to have received. Clearly, Ibn ʿAwkal was suspicious of Simḥūn, who had used the income from the *baqam* to finance the acquisition of goods for himself, and Simḥūn explains in his letter that he did not have time to do any such thing, because between Iyyar and Av he could not have managed to receive the *baqam*, to arrange the shipment to Spain, both to get the payment and to acquire goods for himself. He also mentions Ibn ʿAwkal's demand that he arrange for a large shipment of silk from the Maghrib to Egypt, deeming such a deal to be a misjudgment, because a higher price could be had in Qayrawān. He complains about his big expenses, mainly on the dyers, who seem to have charged him excessively high prices. Ibn ʿAwkal even refused to carry out the writer's instructions to deliver money and merchandise to two of his agents, Salāma and Ibn Yazdād (apparently the Joseph ha-Kohen b. Yazdād that I have already mentioned, above, sec. 377), and caused a certain Farah to cancel a *baqam* deal; he also claims that Ibn ʿAwkal was spreading unfounded rumors about him in Fustat, as if he was conspiring to take over the position of Mūsā b. al-Majjāni, Ibn ʿAwkal's main partner in Qayrawān.

Such an agent partner of the Ibn ʿAwkals, in Sicily, was ABŪ SAʿĪD KHALAF (ḤAYYIM) B. JACOB AL-ANDALUSĪ, highly praised by the Palermo community for his many merits, especially for interceding with the authorities (above, sec. 329), and mentioned in the letters of Ephraim b.

Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī, Ḥasūn b. Isaac al-Khawlanī and Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī. JOSEPH B. LABRĀṬ AL-FĀSĪ, who was active mainly in Qayrawān, was also one of the veteran partners. He also visited Fustat, where he received 10 dinars from Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, apparently as an advance for mutual deals, among them especially indigo and beads (or: pearl) deals, and it appears that he also did business in Tripoli of Libya. The two brothers HĀRŪN and SALĀMA sons of JOSEPH AL-GHAZZĀL ("dealer in yarn") were also Ibn ʿAwkal's people. Two letters of each of them to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal have been preserved, and they are mentioned in the letters of Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī and of others. Hārūn was in Alexandria, receiving shipments of money, transmitting details about ship movements, and handling copper, textile, oil and flax consignments; Salāma also filled a similar role, and we find him sailing to Sicily where he successfully marketed flax and textiles that he had not succeeded in selling in Qayrawān. One of the brothers had a difficult dispute with Abraham b. Simḥūn (apparently the son of the aforementioned Simḥūn b. David) in Palermo, regarding the marketing of flax over there; Abraham b. Simḥūn was very angry about it, as written in his letter to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal. In a letter Ismaʿīl b. Joseph b. Abī ʿUqbā wrote to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, he mentions that al-Ghazzāl was killed during a Byzantine attack on goods-laden ships plying their way to Alexandria.³⁸¹

(382) EPHRAIM B. ISMAʿĪL AL-JAWHARĪ was, it seems, the Ibn ʿAwkal's closest assistant; six letters of his to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, and one letter to the father, Jacob Ibn ʿAwkal, have been preserved. Also preserved in the Geniza, is a letter of his in Arabic script that he wrote to Abū ʿAbdallāh b. Barādār (as it seems it should be read) who was in charge of the commerce supervision office (*dār al-wakāla*), where he informs him that he had sent with Mevorakh al-Ḥalabī, a crate of *muṣṭakā* (mastic, resin), a sack of silk and empty sacks, and asks Abū ʿAbdallāh to register them with the *dār al-wakāla*, as well as with the *dār al-ṣināʿa* (apparently: the Nile port supervision) on both their names, "for death and life are in the hands of God" (why he used such extreme wording is not known), and that he take care that the payment for the goods be made to a certain Abū'l-Ḥasan b. Yahyā. Ephraim's main occupation was organizing shipments from Alexandria. One of his letters talks of a certain Ibn Rustam, who should store the goods in Alexandria; this person helped Ephraim, without remuneration, to receive the shipments, and he was also prepared to help with the ships loading, "and if the loading happens during a holiday, he himself" will deal with the merchandise and handle its shipment to Ibn ʿAwkal in Fustat. Though this is not certain, it appears that this was a

³⁸¹ The letter of Mūsā al-Majjānī: 116, cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, I, 371, no. 9 (Goitein did not notice the date of the letter and assumed that it was written between 1020-1030). Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl: 185. Mūsā b. Ishaq: 191; the accounting of expenses: 195, and see also 196, in which the writer informs that an adequate ship could be obtained in Ashmūnayn (probably for transporting flax on the Nile). Salāma b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: 220; Simḥūn b. David: 221. Hayyim (Khalaf) b. Jacob: 236, and see also the index, in vol. IV of my *Be-malkhūt*. Goitein, *Tarbīz*, 36 (1966/7), 372ff.; 37 (1967/8), 189; also: *Med. Soc.*, II, 61, assumed that Khalaf moved to Mahdiyya, which became the base of his activities; however, the letters show that his main base was in Sicily. Joseph b. Labrāt: 107, cf. Goitein, *Tarbīz*, 37 (1967/8), 177; and 109; the letters of Hārūn b. Joseph: 174, 175; his brother Salāma: 176, 177. Abraham b. Simḥūn: 179.

Muslim who was prepared to replace a Jew during Jewish holidays. In the same letter Ephraim wonders about sending money that had arrived for Ibn ʿAwkal; he intends to send it with one of *ashābnā*, "our people", *min al-thiqāt* "from among the loyal people", and will seek advice and approval from ABŪ IBRAHĪM ISMAʿĪL B. JOSEPH B. ABĪ ʿUQBĀ. The latter was also one of Ibn ʿAwkal's close circle, four letters of his have been preserved, three to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal and one to Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī. We find him in Alexandria, in Damsīs, and in Palermo. In his letter from Damsīs, he writes mainly about the flax harvests that were abundant that year; he also dealt in silk. In another of his letters, this one from Alexandria, he describes a Byzantine attack on a ship, the ship of Ḥamza, mentioning that this is when al-Ghazzāl was killed; we do not know which al-Ghazzāl he meant (above, sec. 381).

A Fās family that also had close ties with the Ibn ʿAwkals was that of FARAH B. IBRAHĪM AL-FĀSĪ and his son JOSEPH. A letter of Farah's to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, apparently from Qayrawān, with many details, especially about flax and textiles, has been preserved. Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī, Hārūn b. Joseph al-Ghazzāl, Simḥūn b. David and Yahyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī, mention them in their letters from Alexandria to Qayrawān. Farah b. Ibrahīm apparently died in 1044, because his partner, Yahyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī, in his letter of February 1045, writes that he had only recently died.

FARAJ, the freedman (*mawlā*) of Barhūn's (apparently: al-Tāhīrtī), also had business dealings with Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, and two letters that he wrote to Joseph concern the acquisition of pearls, for which Joseph sent a considerable sum of money via Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī. Ibrahīm (Barhūn) b. Ismaʿīl al-Tāhīrtī (who may have been the person who freed him) and the sons of Berekhiah, also mention Faraj in their letters. A man from Tripoli of Libya, JOSEPH B. JACOB AL-ĪṬRĀBULUSĪ, was also one of Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal's partners; four of his letters to Joseph have been preserved, from which it is clear that he was involved in flax and other deals with the Maghrib. One of his letters, on parchment, which is faded and only some of it can be read, contains a description of the difficulties he endured when sailing from Barqa to Tripoli and then to Qayrawān. ABŪ SAʿĪD MAYMŪN B. EPHRAIM, who also belonged to the group of partners and agents, is mentioned by Isaac b. Janūn, by Hārūn b. Joseph al-Ghazzāl, and others. Two of his letters to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal have been preserved, only one of which is in a readable state, where he deals with ship movements in Alexandria, with details about some goods. Two letters by ABRAHAM B. JOSEPH AL-ŠABBĀGH, a partner of Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, have been preserved, and another, relatively later letter, to Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī. His letters deal with shipments going via Alexandria, and have a wealth of detail; it appears that he lived to an old age; in the last of his letters he says about himself that he is an old man. His son, Thābit, continued in commerce, and is mentioned in the letters of Mūsā b. Abī'l-Hayy. ḤASŪN B. ISAAC AL-KHAWLĀNĪ was in contact with Ibn ʿAwkal regarding goods from the Maghrib, and wrote to him about them from Alexandria. He mainly mentioned hides and silk. In a detailed letter, written apparently to Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī, he mentions goods that he sent to the Maghrib, especially lapis lazuli, and sends the addressee on

various tasks in Qayrawān. Also to be mentioned are Christian merchants, apparently a group, who had business dealings with the Ibn ʿAwkals; they are mentioned by Joseph b. Jacob al-Īrābulusī, in a letter from Alexandria that he sent to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal: the Christian (*al-naṣārā*) merchants arrived in Alexandria on Ibn Shadīd's ship.³⁸²

6. Other Maghrib families

(383) A merchant family, some of whose members were also scholars, were THE SONS OF BEREKHIAH, of Qayrawān, whom I have already mentioned (above, sec. 126) regarding their ties to the yeshivot, especially with Hayy Gaon and the renewing Sura yeshiva. In the 1060s we find the Mahdiyya merchant, Ḥayyim b. Emmanuel b. Qāyōmā, dealing with the purchase of books for Mevorakh b. Saadia, who would become *nagid* of Egyptian Jewry, from the bequest of Berekhiah, the father of JOSEPH and NISSIM. It appears that these two brothers, about whom we know from the Geniza, were no longer alive at that time; it is implied that the writer delayed the transaction (with the widow, or another woman member of the family, according to how it appears) until he received lists of books (*fahrasa*) that Mevorakh already had, so as to prevent duplication and to buy only what was missing. The intention here is to purchase geonic commentaries and responsa. The legacy contained many books. Mentioned are a commentary to the Talmud tractate *Shabbāt* and 10 quires with commentaries on different talmudic chapters. Some of the books had already been bought by Abū Ishāq (Perhaps: Abraham b. Farrāh, one of the important Alexandrine merchants), and they had already been loaded for him on Fakhr al-ʿArab's ship; Labrāt b. Moses Ibn Sughmār had already paid an advance for Mevorakh from the monies due to his brother, Judah b. Moses (Labrāt was in the Maghrib, Judah in Fustat). People from Sijilmāssa also sought to buy the books, but agreed to wait for Mevorakh's list. For our purposes, this is certainly authentic testimony that the *pater familias*, Berekhiah, was a man of books and a scholar.

The Geniza preserved 10 letters of the two brothers, Joseph and Nissim, sons of Berekhiah, most of which were written by Joseph, and it appears that only one of them is in Nissim's handwriting, it is also the only one that deals with commercial matters, especially with shipments of import goods from Egypt to be marketed in the Maghrib. This letter was sent to Barhūn

³⁸² Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl, see mainly 180, ll. 20-21; his letters 180-185 were written in 1030 or close to it. To Abū ʿAbdallah: ENA NS 71, f. 6, in ʿAodeh, Dissert., no. 6; the matter of Ibn Rustam: 184, ll. 10-11, cf. Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 36 (1966/7), 382f.; the transfer of monies: 184, l. 17. Ismaʿīl b. Joseph, the letter from Damsis: 214; Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 37 (1967/8), 166f., assumed that Ibn ʿAwkal was the maternal uncle of this Ismaʿīl, but in 214, in l. 8, it only says that he has a *khāl* (maternal uncle) who is a *ḥāwēr*, i.e. bearer of the prestigious title of scholar in the Palestinian yeshiva. The Byzantine attack: 216. The letter of Farah b. Abraham: 222; mention of his death: 628, a, l. 9; see on the *muʿāmala* between Joseph b. Farah al-Fāst and Yahyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī: 627, a, l. 11, and see on the financial litigation of this Joseph against this partner 628, a, l. 9, a litigation related to the death of the father, Faraj: 166, 167. Joseph b. Jacob: 169-172, and see his vicissitudes in the last of these letters. Maymūn b. Ephraim: 188, 189. Abraham b. Joseph: 207-209. Ḥasūn b. Isaac: 218, 219. The Christians: 169, a, l. 11.

b. Šālīḥ al-Tāhirtī in Fustat; mentioned therein is the father, Berekhiah, but not the brother, Joseph. The rest of the letters mainly deal with matters of the yeshivot, about queries and money being sent to them, and with other matters of public concern. Did Berekhiah have another son, whose name was Naḥshōn? In the preamble of a responsum of Hayy Gaon's, we read: "Rav Naḥshōn son of Berekhiah of blessed memory asked of our Master Hayy of blessed memory" etc. Here there is a problem of *kunyas*. Judging by the letters at our disposal, Joseph is also called Abū Ya'qūb, as was customary regarding someone by the name of Joseph. We do not know Nissim's *kunya*. In a quire sent by Hayy Gaon, the person for whom it was meant, Abū'l-Faḍl b. Berekhiah, is mentioned. A letter written by Joseph and Nissim, sons of Berekhiah, to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, edited by Assaf (according to D.H. Baneth's deciphering) was believed to say: "our brother, Abū Ya'qūb Naḥshōn, sent 10 dinars to our Lord Hayy"; Assaf had some doubts about reading Naḥshōn here; indeed it does not say Naḥshōn, but Wabhān, no son of Berekhiah's is meant; as to the expression, "our brother", it does not mean an actual brother, but was an accepted term of endearment. From all this, Abramson concluded that Joseph b. Berekhiah's *kunya* was Abū'l-Faḍl and that of Naḥshōn was Abū Ya'qūb, that Naḥshōn was the brother of the two of them, and thus Berekhiah's third son. But this Naḥshōn, who is mentioned in the quire sent by Hayy Gaon, was certainly the son of a different Berekhiah; after all, Berekhiah was a common name in the Maghrib, for example, the grandfather (from Fās) of the Palestinian gaon, Solomon b. Judah, and we have not seen Naḥshōn in Joseph and Nissim's letters, neither in any other letter referring to the sons of Berekhiah whom we are dealing with here.

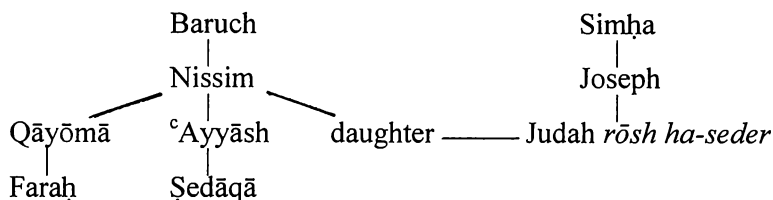
The Berekhiah family had ties of marriage with the Tāhirtīs, more of that later. This is an example of a family tie in conjunction with business ties (or perhaps it was the other way around), a situation which may be seen as typical of the Maghrib merchants who figure so prominently in our discussion. We do not know who married whom, but the sons of Berekhiah refer to the Tāhirtīs as *aṣḥārnā*, from the word *ṣihr*, meaning whatever relationship on the wife's side, or that of a sister or daughter, i.e., father-in-law, brother-in-law, or son-in-law. We find Abū Ya'qūb Joseph b. Berekhiah cooperating with Isma'īl b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī in commercial transactions. There was apparently competition between the Berekhiah family and the al-Majjāni family, more about which below. The sons of Berekhiah complain in their letter to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, about why he had a continuous correspondence with Mūsā b. Yaḥyā al-Majjāni alone. A certain picture about the essence of the sons of Berekhiah's commerce is in a letter of Nissim b. Berekhiah to Barhūn b. Šālīḥ al-Tāhirtī, sent from Qayrawān to Fustat. Nissim sent silk of the *lāsīm* (cheap) kind to Egypt and from there imported spices, indigo, and ammonia. His main view in commerce was: it is best to sell in the winter. Nissim b. Berekhiah lived to a ripe old age, Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī still mentions him in an accounts list that he wrote up in 1057; it is implied there that Nissim still sailed for business reasons, even as far as to Sicily.³⁸³

³⁸³ Berekhiah's legacy: 688; the letters of the sons of Berekhiah: 144-153. The commercial letter: 153. The matter of Naḥshōn b. Berekhiah: *Resp. Lyck*, no. 46; *Sefer ha-*

(384) JUDAH *rōsh ha-seder* (also: *rōsh kallā*) B. JOSEPH B. SIMḤA, whose ties with the Babylonian yeshivot I have already discussed (above, sec. 126), was one of the most important Qayrawān merchants. Four of his letters have been preserved in the Geniza, one to the Tustari brothers, two to the Tāhirtīs—the sons of Barhūn, Ismaʿīl and Šālih, and the fourth letter to his brother-in-law, ʿAyyāsh b. Nissim; the four letters were sent from Qayrawān to Fustat. In his letter to the Tustaris, he mentions his ties with Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, and notes that he is sending 156 dinars and some small change via Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī (who was travelling, so it seems, to Fustat). Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī writes about business transactions in Fustat that he was leaving in the hands of his brother-in-law ʿAyyāsh b. Nissim, and he asks that the addressee assist him in the dealings in the trip he is planning (so it is implied) to Fustat. Another letter, this one to the two Tāhirtī brothers, Ismaʿīl and Šālih, who were in Fustat, was written while he was still aboard ship in Alexandria, and was worried about debarking, lest the wind picks up and it sails off without him; he asks that some items of personal clothing be dispatched to him, which apparently he had forgotten to take along; the main part of his request from the two brothers is that they deal with the sale of the shipment of musk that he has brought, and in exchange purchase *nushāḍīr* (ammonia). The impression is that Judah's financial situation had deteriorated, and that he was very much dependent on the Tāhirtīs' good will. The letter to his brother-in-law, ʿAyyāsh b. Nissim b. Baruch, in Fustat, includes praise for ʿAyyāsh's nephew, Šedāqā (i.e., ʿAyyāsh was Judah's brother-in-law through ʿAyyāsh's sister's marriage to Judah); this Šedāqā, whom he is praising, is staying in Qayrawān, and is also the letter's writer, because his uncle, Judah, suffers from an eye ailment and cannot write. It is clear that ʿAyyāsh was going to deal with his business in Egypt, while his wife and son, as

eshkōl, II, 53; cf. Brüll, *JJGL*, 9 (1889), 125; Poznanski, *Harkavy Jub. Vol.*, 204; see mention of Joseph b. Berekhiah at the beginning of the geonic responsa, in *Ōsar ha-g. to Hagīgā*, 16ff. (taken from Ashkenazi's *Ta'am zeq.*, 54b); Harkavy, *Resp.*, 76 (no. 178), and see *ibid.*, 354f.; in Assaf, *Tarbiz*, 7 (1935/6), 218, there is mention only of "our Master Berekhiah", so also in the fragment from *adab al-qaḍā'* of the gaon, which Assaf edited from a Mosseri manuscript, without shelf-mark (it is not catalogued in the Mosseri Catalogue published by the National Library in Jerusalem); the matter under discussion is when one is permitted to address the courts of gentiles. Abū'l-Faḍl b. Berekhiah: a quote sent to him by Hayy Gaon is mentioned in Bodl no. 793, cited by Abramson, *ʿInyānōt*, 120, and see there the discussion in the continuation. Abū Yaʿqūb Wabhān, see the letter of Joseph and Nissim, sons of Berekhiah: 148, a, top margin, and see in the preamble to this letter, a reference to the one in Assaf's edition. Berekhiah, grandfather of Solomon b. Judah, see: Gil, *Palest.*, II, 208 (no. 114, l. 18 and the note *ibid.*). Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1962), 162, assumed that the *kunya* of Joseph b. Berekhiah was: Abū'l-Faraj. The sons of Berekhiah are also mentioned in Schechter, *JQR*, 11 (1898/9), 650: TS 28.1, II. 70, 74. They were also among the supporters of the Palestinian yeshiva, see Gil, *Hist.*, 528, 606. Some evidence of the connection with the Palestinian yeshiva and their recognition by the yeshiva may be found perhaps in the *ʿalāma: yeshāʿ rav*, of Solomon b. Judah, which is used in the letter of Nissim b. Berekhiah, 153, in the address. Another letter which may be ascribed to Joseph b. Berekhiah is Mosseri III.231 (L. 162), and there it is also a matter of monies intended for the Palestinian yeshiva which were unlawfully appropriated by Isaiyah (Shaʿyā) al-Fāsī (mentioned several times in the letters), see the index in vol. IV of my *Be-malkhūt*. This matter is mentioned also in 145, a, l. 27, and see the discussion in: Gil, *Cathedra*, 70 (1994), 39, with more references. The cooperation with Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī: 119, a, l. 8; *aṣḥārānā*: 149, l. 42. Cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 444 n. 5. The complaint about the relations with the al-Majjānīs: 150, II. 4-5, Nissim's letter: 153. The accounting: 356, c., l. 12.

well as ʿAyyāsh's brothers and their families were still in Qayrawān. The essence of the letter: dealing with merchandise that was meant to arrive in Qayrawān from Egypt, which Judah was awaiting. Another family member mentioned in the letter is Abū'l-Surūr Farah b. Qāyōmā b. Nissim, i.e., the cousin of the person writing the letter for Judah. The following, therefore are the family ties:



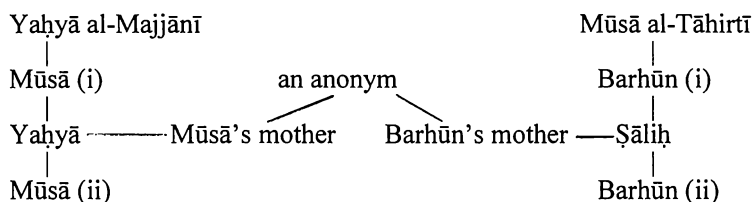
In the letter it was said of this Farah that he was making excellent business deals in the *qumāt* variety of flax. From these letters, as well as the mentioning of him in other letters, one cannot learn about Judah's standing in the world of the yeshivot, because the title *rōsh ha-seder*, or *rōsh kallā*, is never mentioned there; however, it appears that he was one of the most important merchants, enjoyed a high status with the Qayrawān Jews, and it may also be assumed that he was a scholar, even though he was not very good at writing, since every one of his letters was written by someone else; but this may have been the result of the eye ailment.

An important partner of the Ibn ʿAwkals, perhaps the main one, was MŪSĀ B. YAḤYĀ (JUDAH) AL-MAJJĀNĪ; his son, YAḤYĀ (JUDAH), also continued in commercial activity, as did his son, Mūsā. We have three letters in the Geniza from the first Mūsā; the first from 16 February 1000; the next from 25 February 1011, and the third from considerably later, perhaps around 1025. The first letter was written to YESHŪʿĀ B. ISMAʿĪL AL-MAGHRIBĪ, perhaps identical with al-Makhmūrī, who was among Nehorai b. Nissim's main partners. Mūsā b. al-Majjānī is mentioned in many letters by other people: Joseph b. Jacob al-Itrābulusī, the sons of Berekhiah, Nissim b. Jacob (he is Rabbēnū Nissim; regarding the transfer of funds and writings to and from Babylonia), the sons of al-Ghazzāl, the Tāhirtīs, Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī, and others. Mūsā b. al-Majjānī's first letter was written in Fustat; this Maghribi merchant, who lived in Qayrawān, apparently traveled frequently to and from Egypt. It appears that he was then still a young man, because he writes about controversies, leading to separation, between him and his teacher. About 50 years later, we find in a letter by his grandson, named Mūsā like his grandfather, that the Majjānīs had rented a house in Fustat, and that they paid a rental fee of 43 dinars a year; still, this does not make it certain that the family had emigrated to Egypt; it may be that they kept a house in Fustat for business purposes.

In a letter to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, Mūsā deals with a shipment of silver, and he has complaints about the shipment having been given to the Tāhirtīs, who did not handle it properly—they melted down the silver, and by so doing delayed its shipment to Fustat; if he, Mūsā, had managed the deal, it would have been dispatched forthwith with highly trustworthy merchants, Fās people, who were in Qayrawān on their way to Egypt. Those who first had control of the silver refused to hand it over to Mūsā

(because their instructions were to give it only to the Tāhirtīs, of whom they were in-laws, and it appears that it is the sons of Berekhiah who were those in-laws).

Despite the refusal to turn the silver over to them, it appears that the ties between the Majjānīs and the sons of Berekhiah were satisfactory. In a letter to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, of about 1015, the sons of Berekhiah refer to Abū ʿImrān (=Mūsā) b. al-Majjānī: *sihrunā wa-ṣāhibunā*, our in-law and our partner. And, since the sons of Berekhiah were in-laws of the Tāhirtīs, this appears to be a tight party, despite the minor disputes that occasionally broke out among them. We find Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī dealing in the silk trade together with Mūsā b. al-Majjānī; Barhūn b. Ṣāliḥ al-Tāhirtī writes, in circa 1045, to Mūsā (ii) b. Yaḥyā al-Majjānī, sending greetings to Mūsā's father, i.e., to Yaḥyā, and also to *khālātī* ("my maternal aunt"), the addressee's mother, who was Yaḥyā's wife; This, therefore, is how the connection would look:



I.e., the writer's mother and the addressee's mother were sisters; it may also be that the unknown grandfather was one of the sons of Berekhiah. Another possibility is that Mūsā al-Majjānī's father was the Tāhirtī's mother's brother. Relatives of the Majjānīs were also THE SONS OF AL-SHĀMA, people from Barqa. EPHRAIM B. MAYMŪN, Abū Saʿīd Maymūn b. Ephraim's son, one of the Ibn ʿAwkal partners, was another in-law of the Majjānīs. There was also a family tie between the Majjānīs and the family of Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī, for we find that Yaḥyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī was Ephraim's cousin: son of Ephraim's mother's brother. A fragment of parchment, with a remnant of a letter by "Mūsā b. Yaḥyā Majjānī", to "Ibn al-Jawharī", also testifies to the connection between the two. Mūsā (i) b. al-Majjānī died in June 1039, as can be seen in an act of the court, minutes of a complaint against Yaḥyā b. Moses al-Majjānī, recorded in 1042.

We know about YAḤYĀ B. MŪSĀ AL-MAJJĀNĪ largely due to his disputes. Seven of his letters, or letters pertaining to him, are preserved in the Geniza, as is also a letter to him by Joseph b. Judah b. Simḥa, of around 1050. He is mentioned at the time of Ibn ʿAwkal, in the letters of Mūsā b. Ishaq b. Hīsda, of Ephraim b. Ismaʿīl and others. In a number of letters, a dispute of his regarding a certain al-Shīrajī, is mentioned, to whom Yaḥyā b. al-Majjānī owed money; according to Yaḥyā, al-Shīrajī wrote a confirmation that he had received money on account of this debt from Joseph b. Farah b. Abraham al-Fāṣī; it seems that the endorsement was written by al-Shīrajī while ill; he died from that illness, and Joseph b. Farah was claiming the money from Yaḥyā; Yaḥyā's uncle, ISAAC B. ʿALĪ (ʿALLŪSH) AL-MAJJĀNĪ, was also dealing with that dispute even before the issue came to court. The writer considers himself a party to this affair, and knew that

the family could expect a suit. He rejects Joseph b. Farah's claim that he had not been at all that year in Mahdiyya, where that monetary transaction was supposed to take place; the impression one gets is that the Majjānīs did not act with probity in this affair, even though, according to the above-mentioned Isaac b. ʿAlī, Rabbēnū Ḥananel also ruled that he was in the right. Doubts about Yaḥyā b. al-Majjānī's honesty also come up from his letter to Fustat, to Zechariah b. Tammām, of apparently 1 September 1040, regarding Yaḥyā's quarrel with Abū'l-Faraj Jacob b. Abraham Ibn ʿAllān; he asks the addressee, apparently a close friend, perhaps even a family relation of his, that he pay in his name 100 dinars, because he was left without any money; this Zechariah, the addressee, is accused by Fustat people of having cursed the *nagid* (apparently the *nagid* of the Maghrib, Jacob b. ʿAmram) and the *dayyān*, i.e., Rabbēnū Ḥananel, perhaps because he did not accept the Majjānīs' claims. The writer, Yaḥyā b. al-Majjānī, has reservations about it, because one does not curse a distinguished person, especially if he is in another city.

The above Jacob b. Abraham's claim against the Majjānīs, is recorded in detail in a court act of 1042; Yaḥyā b. al-Majjānī was in Fustat, while his rival was in Qayrawān, therefore, the court had to send the protocol over there, to Ḥananel b. Ḥushiel, i.e., Rabbēnū Ḥananel and to the *nagid*, Jacob b. ʿAmram; Jacob b. Abraham, in a lengthy introduction, expressed full trust in the probity and the absence of any prejudice in the two of them, as if to neutralize the suspicion that the *nagid* might tend towards al-Majjānī because of his ties with him.

Yaḥyā b. al-Majjānī died in the summer of 1056; Joseph b. Farah, who was Yaḥyā's rival, as we have seen, mentions, in his letter of 6 September 1056 to his brother Farah b. Ismaʿīl, that a letter had arrived from the Maghrib, on 29 July 1056, with the information about Yaḥyā al-Majjānī's death.

Three letters from Isaac b. ʿAlī (ʿAllūsh) al-Majjānī are left in the Geniza, including a letter to one of his sons, Wāfi, and a letter to Nehorai b. Nissim. In the letter to Nehorai there are echoes of a consultation, with the participation of Nehorai and others, regarding the disposal of a large debt; there, Isaac mentions a medicine for an eye ailment that he suffers from.

A short letter (*tadhkira*) to Nehorai b. Nissim, of about 1052, written by the grandson of Mūsā b. al-Majjānī, is preserved, with clarifications regarding some goods consignments. From some references in commercial letters, it is clear that he moved from the Maghrib to Egypt, and that he was involved in commerce with the other merchants in the Tāhirtī circle and with Nehorai b. Nissim.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ The letters of Judah b. Joseph: 154-157; the first is a letter to the Tustarīs; the letters of Mūsā (I) b. al-Majjānī: 116-118. The rented house in Fustat: 634; Mūsā (I) traveling back and forth between Fustat and Qayrawān: 146, a, l. 4. The matter of the money: 117, a, l. 6ff.; cf. Goitein, *Tarbiz*, 37 (1967/8), 73, who assumes that the matter was about silver coins and other remains of silver vessels, sent from Spain. Stillman, *JESHO*, 16 (1973), 26, assumes that the Tāhirtis melted down the silver and sold it. The family connections with the Berekhiah family: 145, a, l. 26. Business with the Tāhirtis: 129; family connections with the Tāhirtis: 334. The al-Shāma family: 733, a, l. 27. Ephraim b. Maymūn: 760, a, l. 6; see also 639, the letter of Ephraim b. Maymūn, perhaps from Qayrawān, to Isaac b. ʿAlī al-Majjānī, which seems to indicate that Ephraim was his brother-in-law, probably the brother of Isaac's wife; the writer mentions Isaac's grandfather and his mother. The letter contains information

7. The Tāhirtī family

(385) The Tāhirtī family occupies a central place in the information in the Geniza documents of the mid-eleventh century, information that indeed reflects a true situation of this family's centrality in the area of international trade. Aside from the family members called the sons of al-Tāhirtī, because of their descent from the men of the family, Nehorai b. Nissim also belonged to this family, on his mother's side; about him I will be devoting a separate chapter, because of his special status and the relative abundance of letters that reached the Geniza from his archive. In my collection 128 letters and fragments of letters from the Tāhirtī archive are printed, 69 of which were written by members of the family, and 59 that were written to them.

At first we find the family in the Maghrib, in Qayrawān. The *pater familias* was then BARHŪN (=ABRAHAM) B. ISMA'ĪL, from whom we have a letter he sent to Jacob b. Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, from Qayrawān to Fustat, regarding commercial affairs, and it is obvious that they had a connection of mutual service; the Tāhirtī sent Ibn 'Awkal what was due to him for goods that were sold in Qayrawān, and writes that he will receive more money for ammonia, *būmulayḥ* (a kind of spice), indigo, medicinal bindweed (convolvulus), and pearls; he expects the amber that he had sent to Fustat to be sold, and he asks that Ibn 'Awkal buy fine *'amtānī* indigo for him. There are also details about the bequest of a man who had died in Fustat, while his heirs are in Qayrawān (as it would seem). His signature,

and advice concerning one of the litigation cases of the al-Majjānī family. A certain Barakāt is appointed *wakīl* (trustee) in the action against them. Ephraim b. Isma'īl al-Jawharī: 180, l. 17; the parchment fragment: TS 13 J 29, f.11; the letter was sent to Alexandria, and Salāma b. Joseph al-Ghazzāl is mentioned there as well. The death of Mūsā (i): as it emerges from 632, b, ll. 20, 44-45, 57 and see there the notes to these lines; in line 57 there is mention of a letter in Arabic script, from about 25 July 1039, in which Yahyā mentions the death of his father Mūsā. Therefore, it stands to reason that the death occurred in June 1039; *ibid.*, II, l. 6, there is mention of the man who was the letter-writer for the Majjānīs: Elḥanan b. Sa'āda. David b. Sha'yā, of the personalities of Fustat, testifies there, II, l. 8, against Yahyā b. al-Majjānī, saying that he received letters from Yahyā b. Mūsā, written by that Elḥanan b. Sa'āda. On the death of Mūsā b. Yahyā see also 630, the letter of Yahyā b. Mūsā, of 1 September, 1040, a, l. 22. Yahyā b. Mūsā's letters: 627-630; the acts of court: 632, 633; the letter of Joseph b. Judah: 730; see the matter of al-Shīrajī: 828; Joseph b. Farah al-Fāsī is identical with Joseph b. Farah al-Qābisī, to be mentioned below. The letter of Isaac b. 'Alī: 635; this son of the al-Majjānī family is probably identical with Ibn 'Allūsh al-Jazzār, who was in conflict with the Qābisī Ḍvōn b. Šedāqā, who lived in Jerusalem, and was perhaps a relative of that Joseph b. Farah. The letters of Ḍvōn contain grave accusations against that b. 'Allūsh, see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 226f. (no. 498, a, ll. 14-16), 256 (no. 503, b, lines 22ff.). The letter to Zechariah b. Tammām: 630. The court action of Jacob b. Abraham: 632. The letter of Joseph b. Farah: 513, a, ll. 16-17; *ibid.*, b., top margin, there is confirmation of the fact that Isaac b. 'Alī al-Majjānī was Yahyā's cousin; the writer asks Farah b. Isma'īl, who is in Fustat, to convey his sympathies to Isaac b. 'Alī on his cousin's death. The letters of Isaac b. 'Alī: 635-637; the letter to Nehorai: 636; the letter to Wāfi: 637, where there is also a draft of a letter written by Wāfi; the time: 1059. Implied is that Isaac had another son, and also a daughter, who was in Egypt with Wāfi. *Qirq* (shoes), and *rayḥān* (sweet basil), were sent to that girl, which made her happy. The letter of Mūsā the grandson: 634; I have already mentioned him, above in this note. His Hebrew name was Moses b. Judah; "Moses b. Judah, known by the nickname Ibn al-Majjānī", hands over to Ḥabība b. Nathan b. Sason the cost of maintenance which she received from her father for her orphan son Moses, and Ḥabība confirms it in a deed of receipt, in the year Sel. 1376, 1056: TS 13 J 1, f. 17, cited by Goitein, *Med Soc.*, III, 481.

"Abraham b. Isma'īl the Tāhirtī", which can be read with certainty after some effort in the original document, is at the end of the letter.

Barhūn b. Isma'īl had four sons; ISMA'IL, the eldest, was, of course, named for his grandfather, the others were ŠĀLIḤ, ISAAC and MOSES. At the beginning of the eleventh century the sons were already adults and active in business. From the letters whose dates are to a reasonable extent known, there is a letter written by Šāliḥ in 1008; a letter by Isma'īl from 1011; and the "sons of Barhūn", i.e., the sons of Barhūn b. Isma'īl al-Tāhirtī, are mentioned in the beginning of 1011 in a letter of Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī. The three Tāhirtī brothers: Šāliḥ, Isaac and Mūsā, write to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal in 1008 (the handwriting is that of Šāliḥ). It appears that in this period there was a great deal of commercial cooperation among the brothers. A letter written by an unidentified person of the Tāhirtī family, deals with the sale of consignments of flax that belong to Mūsā and Isaac the sons of Barhūn, and to Barhūn and Judah the sons of Šāliḥ b. Barhūn. From these few details, but also from elsewhere in their correspondence, and the letters of their counterparts, one may derive that the Tāhirtīs were a close-knit family, supported each other, and cooperated in the classic manner of such Maghribis, part of whose family was in Fustat, and others were elsewhere: in Alexandria; in the regions where flax was cultivated; in Palestine, Syria, Sicily, and the Maghrib (including Spain); together with them, as it would seem, were also Nehorai b. Nissim and the other relations and partners. In one of his letters, Nehorai b. Nissim demands that two cousins, members of the third generation, cooperate with each other; this was the approach throughout; naturally, within all of this cooperation, the accounts stayed separate, each brother and brother, cousin and cousin.³⁸⁵

(386) The Tāhirtī family is an excellent example of what was happening in the merchant families in the shift of focus in the Mediterranean Sea from the Maghrib to Egypt. It appears that the first Tāhirtī brother who settled in Egypt, or stayed there for a length of time, was Abū'l-Faḍl Šāliḥ b. Barhūn; a letter of one of the Tāhirtī brothers to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, states that his brother, Abū'l-Faḍl, is traveling to Fustat with letters and accounts for Ibn 'Awkal. Mūsā b. Barhūn tells Joseph Ibn 'Awkal that Abū'l-Faḍl was already in Egypt, with fine pearls. The merchant, the Alexandrine, Abraham b. Farrāḥ, notes in one of his letters (June 1054) that Abū'l-Faḍl Šāliḥ was in Dandīr. Therefore, it appears that Šāliḥ had settled in Egypt, also being there when he was advanced in years; he was there some 30 years, all told; it appears that Barhūn b. Šāliḥ was in Fustat most of the time, though we can also find him in Barqa and in Mahdiyya. On the other hand, the eldest brother, Isma'īl b. Barhūn, was in the Maghrib most of the

³⁸⁵ See a summary about the Tāhirti family: Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 181f.; the letter of Barhūn b. Isma'īl: 112. See the preamble to this letter and the notes to the alternative reading of Goitein, which induced him to formulate details in the genealogy of the Tāhirtīs (as also of Nehorai b. Nissim), different from mine; see the genealogy as proposed by Goitein, *Lévi Provençal Mem. Vol.*, 568. Goitein ascribed that letter to Isma'īl, i.e. the writer's son. The dates of the sons: Šāliḥ: 131; Isma'īl: 122; the sons of Barhūn: 117, a, l. 7. The three brothers write: 130; the flax is common: 133. In 132, l. 8, there is mention of a certain Rawḥ, who may have been a fifth brother, but this is doubtful. Cousins have to cooperate: 257, b, ll.3-4.

time, and his letters were sent from Mahdiyya—with one exception, that one sent from Qayrawān. But it appears that Ismaʿīl also eventually settled in Egypt. We have no explicit information regarding Isaac b. Barhūn, the third brother, to gather where he stayed, but it can be inferred that he remained in the Maghrib, because his son, Barhūn b. Isaac writes all his letters—from Mahdiyya—except for one letter that was sent from Tripoli of Libya; his brother, Nissim b. Isaac, was also in the Maghrib. Elḥanan b. Ismaʿīl, the eldest son of the eldest brother, also settled in Fustat; of Mūsā b. Barhūn's two sons, the elder, Barhūn b. Mūsā, was in Egypt, mainly in Alexandria, but also reached Sicily and Ascalon, and also stayed in Palestine. Joseph b. Mūsā, his brother, was mainly in the Maghrib, in Mahdiyya, but also visited Egypt frequently: Alexandria and Būṣīr, the center of flax cultivation.

Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn, the eldest of the brothers, writes from Mahdiyya, to his brother's son, Barhūn b. Šāliḥ, about the state of the houses that the family had abandoned in the Maghrib: the sewage pipes are clogged, the roofs broken into; rabble elements had squatted in the street; the courtyard was in need of repairs, and for this it was necessary to transport building materials through the corridors; the pipe (sewage? water?) had to be exposed (i.e., it was embedded in the ground), certainly in order for it to be replaced. In time—as it appears—these houses were totally abandoned. Maghribis coming from Egypt, would rent apartments for the time of their stay and move out after the business and sailing season, i.e., at the end of the summer. This is expressed by one of the merchants, Mūsā b. Isaac b. Nissim al-ʿĀbid, in the letter he wrote from Mahdiyya, to Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī: he intends to host (as is implied) the addressee and his partner, Ibn Sughmār, for a few days, “because people turned in their apartments and left”. The sorrow and pain about leaving the Maghrib, can be keenly felt in the letter Ismaʿīl's b. Barhūn's sister wrote to him, from Mahdiyya to Fustat; Ismaʿīl had embarked on a business voyage, and she “sits near the wall, accompanying the voyagers”. She is anxious about the possibility that her brother will be away for a long time (but this did not happen): “in the name of God, my brother, return to your home and place of origin, even though you have excuses”; she writes about other heart-touching matters about the sorrow of the women left at home, and asks: “why, my brother, did you do such things to yourself? In such a winter all you had to do was walk from home to the synagogue”; “By God, I have been fasting for 60 days, until Abū'l-Surūr swore that if I fast he will have no alternative but to travel”. The travelers end was sometimes bitter. “The cup has passed over al-Zarqā ('the blue-eyed one') my cousin.... today her brother has died at sea”. “The son of Dānūka is on the way to Būna and is left with nothing”. The same daughter of Barhūn writes another letter, from which one can learn that some members of the family, including Ismaʿīl's daughters, are in Mahdiyya, that one of them was already married and another was engaged (in her father's absence); Šāliḥ and Isaac, the sons of Barhūn, the addressee's brother, are in Mahdiyya; a daughter was born to Šāliḥ and named Surūra (a name relating to happiness). Another letter by a woman was sent, apparently from Qayrawān, to the Tāhirtīs in Egypt, especially to a relative of Mūsā b. Barhūn, also with information about some members of the family who had remained in the Maghrib. They “are treating me very

nicely.... mainly because of you, because they love you very much, and all of them, the small and the grown, always mention you fondly”.

The Tāhīrtīs had strong ties, both commercial and familial, with the prominent merchant families of the eleventh century. Above, I have already written about the family ties between them and the Majjānīs. Especially close were the commercial ties with the Tustaris. Mūsā and Isaac b. Barhūn write to the Tustaris thanking them for caring for their two brothers (i.e., Ismaʿīl and Šāliḥ); it need not be concluded that they were with the Tustaris in some kind of tutorship capacity, this may only be a polite manner of writing. The Tustaris, together with the sons of Berekhiah, and Judah b. Joseph *rōsh ha-seder*, were also some kind of liaison link in the relationships of the Tustaris, and especially of Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn, with the Babylonian yeshivot. From an especially poorly preserved letter, one may gather that the Tāhīrtīs dealt with the purchase of flax, in the Qālūs, for the Tustaris. The special bond between the Tāhīrtīs and the Tustaris is also attested to by a copy of a guardianship deed written in Mahdiyya on 29 March 1059, where a Sicilian, David b. ʿAmmār, grants power of attorney to Barhūn b. Mūsā, to deal with collecting what was due to him by Ḥesed al-Tustarī (nearly two years after he was killed by the regime). The Tāhīrtī, Barhūn b. Isaac, had special ties with the Tustaris that I will be dealing with below.³⁸⁶

(387) The oldest brother, ABŪ IBRAHĪM ISMAʿĪL B. BARHŪN, was egregious in a number of respects, essentially by the fact that most of his activity, as reflected in the letters, was in the public arena. One of his letters, written to Ephraim b. Shemariah, dealt with an appeal being held in Qayrawān, with an explanation as to why the initiative to hold an appeal for the Palestinian yeshivot failed, as I have described above (sec. 123). Ismaʿīl used to call himself Samuel b. Abraham, i.e., not with Arab names. We find him sending queries to Hayy Gaon regarding the laws of partnership. Clearly, he was a man of standing in the community; he dealt with the matter of a woman who was living with a man, though her having received a *gēṭ* from her husband was in doubt; regarding this matter two queries were sent to Hayy Gaon about which he answered, in one responsum, in Arabic. Ismaʿīl was also one of the regular and important partners in the processes (apparently complicated) of transmitting funds to the Babylonian yeshivot. He carried the money on his person when traveling with a Muslim caravan from Qayrawān; this was money that he had received from the people of Qābis when he was on the way to Fustat. The sons of

³⁸⁶ Abū'l-Faḍl Šāliḥ travels to Fustat: 198, l. 11; Goitein, *Zion*, 27 (1962), 156, assumed that it was written by Mūsā b. Barhūn, but it seems to me that this is not certain, and each one of Šāliḥ's three brothers could have been meant. Šāliḥ in Egypt: 129, a, ll. 7-10. Šāliḥ in Dandīr: 547, a, l. 23. The location of the family members can be known from their letters, as also from letters sent to them, though this cannot be concluded with absolute certainty. Barhūn b. Mūsā in Palestine: see his letter from Jerusalem in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 96ff. (no. 458). See *idem*, *Hist.*, 263f.; the condition of the derelict houses: 120, b., ll. 2-5. Returning the houses: 234, a, ll. 14-15 (differently understood by Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 157). The sister's letters: 159, 160 (written by a brother-in-law, Šedāqā b. ʿAyyāsh). The other letter: 161; the letter to the Tustaris: 128; the relations with the Berekhiah family, with Judah b. Joseph, and with the Babylonian yeshivot: 150, 154, 155, 156; buying flax in the Qālūs: 138 (the handwriting is that of one of the Tāhīrtīs). Power of attorney to Barhūn b. Mūsā: 649; cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 183.

Berekhiah consult with him about the ties with the yeshivot, when for a period of two years no letters arrived from them. Also he had monies from Spain and Yemen (Tabāla) before their shipment to Fustat, to Ibn ʿAwkal. Mentioned is a letter of Hayy Gaon's that reached Qayrawān first via the Tustaris, i.e., via Fustat, and from the Tustaris was sent to Abū Ibrāhīm Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī. Another tie, a more convenient one, was forged when Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī, Ismaʿīl's brother, moved and settled in Fustat; Judah *rōsh ha-seder* b. Joseph b. Simḥa brought the money that he had received from Ismaʿīl al-Tāhīrtī to Fustat, to Mūsā b. Barhūn, and it is he who passes it on to the Tustaris. I have already written (above, sec 235) about Hayy Gaon's ruling in the Tāhīrtīs' favor in a dispute between them and someone who had purchased indigo from them; Ismaʿīl writes about it to Ephraim b. Shemariah in an apologetic tone about them not having shown him the letters of Hayy Gaon—even though he was the chief *ḥāvēr* in Fustat—but having sent them directly to Qayrawān; he promises that a copy will be sent to Ephraim from there. The two letters that Ismaʿīl wrote to Ephraim b. Shemariah that have been preserved in the Geniza, are testimony that Ismaʿīl made efforts to maintain a connection with the 'Palestinians' in Fustat, and also with the Palestinian yeshiva; there is also evidence that he had stayed in Palestine, in the letter of Jacob b. Joseph al-Tūnīsī to Šālīḥ b. Barhūn in Ramla; Šālīḥ and Ismaʿīl were both staying there. An accounts list compiled by Nehorai b. Nissim in 1061, includes the detail, "completion of the vow of charity of Abū Ibrāhīm (i.e., Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn) for Jerusalem".

Along with community affairs, Ismaʿīl also dealt in commerce, which was how he made his livelihood. He deals with matters regarding shipments in a letter he wrote to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, in August 1011. The letter deals with the transfer of money, the sale of yarn, silk products, and shipments of copper that he sent in Abū'l-Dhahab's ship, and a consignment of wool (apparently in partnership with Salāma b. al-Ghazzāl); there is mention of the plan to buy purple dye that was needed in the Maghrib; there was a price list, not preserved, of the goods. A certain Joseph b. Jacob writes to Ismaʿīl from Libyan Tripoli, regarding a man whose behavior was causing business difficulties, and whom Ismaʿīl had to set straight. There is also a letter of the members of a family, the Judaylas, in the Maghrib, to Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī, about a matter that is not very clear. The father of the family gave five dinars for *qaṭārish*, a cheap kind of silk, to a certain Isaiah (apparently, the Isaiah al-Fāsī mentioned in some letters), a person who had business connections with the Tāhīrtīs; he kept the money and did not supply the goods; the Judaylas, sons and daughters, were in distress, and asked Ismaʿīl to send them flax for that money so that they may make (as is implied) clothes for themselves, because the daughters had nothing to wear. We do not know when Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī died; he is mentioned with the blessing for the dead in an accounts list compiled by Nehorai b. Nissim in 1061, but it appears that he had died some years before. From that accounts list, we know that he was in partnership with Nehorai, and his son (Elḥanan, apparently), had to receive the remainder of his father's share.

Barhūn was the eldest of Ismaʿīl al-Tāhīrtī's sons. Barhūn b. Ismaʿīl is mentioned relatively frequently in the letters of Nehorai b. Nissim, and of

his main partner, Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, and also in the letters of some others of the family, his paternal cousins: Barhūn b. Mūsā and his brother, Joseph. From one of these letters, that of Joseph b. Mūsā, we know that his sister, the daughter of Isma'īl, lived in Mahdiyya; Joseph writes from Mahdiyya to Fustat, to Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, and among other things, writes:

and I beseech thee, brother, if Barhūn, the son of my cousin Isma'īl, of blessed memory, is there, greet him for me, and tell him that his sister yearns greatly for him, and that since the day he left she had not seen a letter or an epistle from him, except for what others tell her from their letters; if he comes, may God write him for peace, and if he stays (in Fustat)—perhaps he may send some sums for her to spend on her daughters, the children of his sister.

We learn about Barhūn b. Isma'īl's arrival in Fustat from a letter of Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī, writing from Mahdiyya to Fustat, to Nehorai b. Nissim, on 26 January 1048: "and send my Lord Abū Ishāq Barhūn, son of Isma'īl my cousin, the best of greetings; God knows how happy I was about his arrival" (in Fustat). Barhūn died at about 1060, as can be learned from the letter of his cousin, Nissim b. Isaac.

From the other son, Elhanan, a letter that he wrote to Nehorai b. Nissim and 'Ayyāsh b. Šedāqā has been preserved with details about a consignment of flax. Elhanan is often mentioned in Nehorai's letters, and in the letters of his cousins, Barhūn b. Mūsā and Barhūn b. Šālih, and other family relations. He died after his brother, perhaps in 1062, as can be learned from the letter of Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, that he apparently wrote shortly before his demise, in 1062, to Nehorai b. Nissim:

my brother, my Lord Abū Abraham Isaac b. Jacob (b. Lanjū) requested that I ask you about what Elhanan, of blessed memory, instructed him; and you well know about his faith and fear of Heaven (of that Isaac b. Jacob); according to him, his clothes were lost on the way when he was in our service, and he believed him, may he be of blessed memory (that he will receive their cost) but he did not receive it from him; and he (Isaac b. Jacob) wrote you a power of attorney (to receive the cost from the inheritance money); therefore, meet with whomever deemed proper in this matter and fill his request as should be. I can no longer tell them (the family of Isaac b. Jacob): he can't, he is not able (to any longer) accede to people's requests; they do not accept this from me, because of your renown. May God add to (what) you (have).³⁸⁷

³⁸⁷ The queries of "Master Samuel b. Abrahm Tāhīrtī": see Harkavy, *Resp.*, 7; "the query of Master Samuel Tāhīrtī" (together with Isaac b. al-ʿĀbid, who is Isaac b. Nissim al-ʿĀbid, mentioned in 312, a, l. 12), about "a man ('Reuben') from Qayrawān, who traveled to Fustat for business...." (the continuation is missing), see Assaf, *Mi-sifr. Ha-g.*, 229. The matter of the woman who lives with another: 125. Monies from Qābis for the yeshiva: 142. The consultation: 144, margin (the consultation is with the "sons of Barhūn", but undoubtedly it is Isma'īl). Concentrating the monies: 148, ll. 9ff.; the letter of Hayy Gaon: 150, ll. 13ff. Mūsā b. Barhūn transfers money: 154. The letter to Ephraim b. Shemariah: 124. The other letter to him: 125. The letter to Ramla: 140. Nehorai's accounting: 295, b, l. 1. The letter of 1011: 122. The letter of Joseph b. Jacob: 727. The Judayla family: 126. The legacy of Isma'īl: 295, a, ll. 54, 58; b, ll. 8ff.; the longings of Barhūn's sister: 372, b, ll. 13-14. The letter of Barhūn b. Isaac: 379, a, ll. 42f. the letter of Nissim b. Isaac: 393, a, l. 3; it mentions "the demise of our Lord and Head, my cousin Barhūn, may he find mercy", and see the note

(388) ABŪ'L-FAḌL ŠĀLIḤ (MAŠLIAḤ) B. BARHŪN (ABRAHAM) was apparently the second son of Barhūn (a) b. Isma'īl. Three of his letters have been preserved—two of them in his handwriting, and a remnant of a letter with only the preamble and the address. Two of them were written in August 1008, and the third, about which we cannot know the exact date, apparently belongs to about that time. The three of them were meant for Joseph Ibn 'Awkal, from Qayrawān to Fustat. Also preserved is a letter to Šāliḥ that Jacob b. Joseph al-Tūnisī wrote from Fustat, when Šāliḥ himself was staying in Palestine, in Ramla, with his eldest brother, Isma'īl. He is mentioned in commercial letters of merchants, his contemporaries: the sons of Berekhiah, Judah b. Joseph, Abraham b. Farrāḥ, Jacob b. Salmān, and others; and in the letters of family relations: his brother Mūsā, Nehorai b. Nissim, and Šedāqā b. 'Ayyāsh. A voyage of his to Spain, at about 1030, is mentioned. It appears that he lived to an old age, to the 1060s, because Jacob b. Salmān al-Ḥarīrī mentions him in 1057, and Nehorai b. Nissim—in 1060. We have no information about his daughter SURŪRA, whom we have mentioned above, except for the fact of her birth; we know about his two sons, Abū Ishaq Barhūn and Judah. It appears that Judah was not very involved in the family business, because he is mentioned only three times in the letters of my collection. He is first mentioned in a bill for the sale of flax that had belonged to the Tāhirtīs, apparently in Tripoli of Libya, in 1025, together with his brother: “notice of the sale of flax of Barhūn and Judah sons of Šāliḥ b. Barhūn that arrived in the year (AH) 415” (1024/5); Nehorai b. Nissim mentions him in 1061. We have nine of the letters of the eldest brother, BARHŪN B. ŠĀLIḤ, and nine letters that were written to him. Many people mention him in their letters: Nehorai b. Nissim, Isma'īl b. Barhūn (his father's brother); his cousins, Barhūn and Joseph the sons of Mūsā, Barhūn b. Isaac and the family relations Israel b. Nathan, 'Ayyāsh b. Šedāqā, Abraham b. Farrāḥ, Mardūkh b. Mūsā and others; he was a witness, signing a court document (a deed of power of attorney regarding an inheritance) in 1043: Abraham b. Mašliaḥ التاهرتي (al-Tāhirtī). There is no letter of his with a definite date, but it appears that those of his letters that have been preserved, were written about 1050.

As I have noted above, Barhūn b. Šāliḥ stayed mainly in the Maghrib, and apparently that is where he had his house. However, he often visited Egypt. One of his letters was written in Būšīr, the center of one of the flax growing areas, where he prepared flax for shipment before returning to Mahdiyya. In one of his letters he writes about his intention of soon sailing to Sicily, and that he was considering searching ‘the islands’ (without noting which ones) for pearls, because they are the glory (*shawār*) of the place, and also carnelian (*‘aqīq*). He was apparently a sickly man, Nehorai writes to him: “your letters have arrived and I read therein matters that had me worried, because you write that you fell ill, I beseech God to place you in bounds of well-being”. Concern about him also arose following a sea disaster that struck the ship of Waḥlān; his cousin, Nissim b. Isaac al-Tāhirtī, writes (apparently in September 1051) to the Sicilian, Ḥayyim b. 'Ammār, that “we learned something that set aside the sorrow about him

there. The letter of Elḥanan b. Isma'īl al-Tāhirtī: 387. The demise of Elḥanan: 348, b., ll. 21ff.

(the death of Barhūn b. Ismaʿīl), that is, the matter of the ship of Waḥlān, where my cousin, the son of Šāliḥ was, until now we have not heard anything about his condition" etc. Yet the concern for Barhūn b. Šāliḥ regarding the ship of Waḥlān, was unnecessary, for as we see, Nehorai b. Nissim mentions him about 10 years later in an account that he drew up in 1061, and Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī mentions him in a letter of 2 February 1063. From both the letter of Barhūn b. Šāliḥ and that of Nehorai b. Nissim, one sees that there was a strong cooperation between the two. There were also fast ties between Barhūn b. Šāliḥ and his cousin, Mūsā b. Barhūn and his sons, Barhūn and Joseph. Barhūn b. Šāliḥ, and his cousin, Barhūn b. Mūsā, wrote a letter together from Alexandria, to Nehorai b. Nissim, regarding a legal conflict, apparently involving the three of them, with an anonym, about matters of timber. A problem for both Barhūn b. Šāliḥ and Barhūn b. Mūsā, regarding the debt of two people: Kāmil and b. Ḥajjāj, who were not paying up, is mentioned in a letter of the two cousins.³⁸⁸

(389) The third son of Barhūn (a) b. Ismaʿīl al-Tāhirtī, was ABŪ'L-SURŪR IŠḤAQ (ISAAC). He is mentioned in the letters of his contemporaries: Ephraim b. Nissim writes to him from one of the Delta localities; Dunash b. Isaac writes to him from Tripoli of Libya; Simḥūn b. David, a Sicilian, mentions him in a letter from Qayrawān; writing to him, or mentioning him, are his sons, Barhūn and Nissim, his brother Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn and Šedāqā b. ʿAyyāsh. It appears that he had an important place in trade between countries and organizing shipments, because the eldest brother, Ismaʿīl, seeks his intervention in the matter of damages caused to him by the people of b. al-Iskandar's ship, and the conflict that consequently ensued. Isaac b. Barhūn apparently died in 1049, because his son Barhūn mentions him in a blessing for the departed at the end of July 1049, and according to the matter at hand, it appears that it was shortly after his father's death.

Isaac's three sons, Barhūn, Nissim, and ʿAṭāʾ, continued to be deeply involved in international commerce. Eleven letters of Barhūn b. Isaac have been preserved. In his letters, at least, Barhūn b. Isaac displays great self-confidence—for example, when writing to Nehorai b. Nissim, from Mahdiyya; he turns to Nehorai regarding an oil transaction; the precise details have not been preserved, but it appears that he is interested in Nehorai being his partner, "for then you will have success, because you will be doing so with someone who will not be causing you to lose thereby". In general, one feels that he and Nehorai were very close, he is even living in the same house as Nehorai, *dār al-birka*, in Fustat; however, until about 1050, Barhūn b. Isaac was in the Maghrib; we then find him traveling and

³⁸⁸ The letters of Šāliḥ b. Barhūn al-Tāhirtī: 130-132; the letter to Ramla: 140; the journey to Spain: 148, l. 34. Mentioned in 1057: 663, a, ll. 13, 15; in 1060: 289, d, l. 3; the accounting of flax: 133, c; Nehorai's letter: 294, a, l. 12. The letters of Barhūn b. Šāliḥ al-Tāhirtī: 328-336; the act of court: 143, b, l. 15. The visit to Būšir: 330. A planned visit to Sicily: 328, a, l. 22; b, ll. 3ff. Nehorai on his illness: 257, a, l. 4; 258, a, ll. 4-5; the mention of Barhūn b. Šāliḥ in Nehorai's accounting: 294, d, l. 4. The letter of Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī: 372, a, l. 15; the father, Šāliḥ, is the one who is mentioned there with the blessing for the departed. The cooperation with Nehorai is visible mainly in 333, written in common by Barhūn b. Šāliḥ and Nehorai, and there is mention in it that Nehorai rented a *qāʿa* (an apartment) in Qasr al-Shamʿ, and is about to move there with his family. The letter written in common with Barhūn b. Mūsā: 341. The unpaid debt: 332, 345.

staying mostly in Mahdiyya and in Qayrawān until he moved to Fustat. His letters deal a lot with caravans, with matters of sea haulage, Maghrib commerce, jewelry, and currency exchange. He had special ties with the Tustaris, and made great efforts to bring Nehorai b. Nissim into these relationships, particularly regarding flax commerce. We find him making purchases in the Maghrib—especially purchases of silk—for Abū Naṣr, i.e., Ḥesed al-Tustarī. Nehorai had to market these goods in Fustat and buy flax for the Tustari in Egypt; in order to buy flax in Būṣīr, he writes, Nehorai required a recommendation from the Tustari. In one of his letters there is mention of “a terrible calamity” that occurred in Fustat, knowledge of which reached Mahdiyya, the murder of Abraham al-Tustarī. The business with Ḥesed al-Tustarī continued. In October 1049, Barhūn b. Isaac was still promising that he would write a letter of recommendation to Ḥesed al-Tustarī for ʿAyyāsh b. Ṣedāqā. Barhūn b. Isaac's letters reflect a genuine and relatively comprehensive picture of the Tāhirtīs energetic commercial activity and characteristic dynamism.

There is very little information available about Barhūn b. Isaac's two brothers, Nissim and ʿAṭā. Five letters have been preserved of ABŪ'L-FARAJ NISSIM B. ISAAC, and another letter written to him by ʿAyyāsh b. Ṣedāqā; Nissim made many business trips, such as to Safāḡuṣ and to Sūsa; he dealt with sea shipments and arrangements for them, and had dealings with the authorities, such as the sale of a shipment of soap to the sultan; he also stayed in Sicily and for a certain period traveled to and fro from there to Egypt. ABŪ SAHL ʿAṬĀ' B. ISAAC was apparently the youngest of the three brothers; letters of his have not been preserved, but he is mentioned in the letters of the Tāhirtīs and their relatives.³⁸⁹

(390) ABŪ'L-KHAYR MŪSĀ (MOSES) B. BARHŪN (ABRAHAM) AL-TĀHIRTĪ was the fourth son of Barhūn ‘the elder’ b. Ismaʿīl, the *pater familias*. Four of his letters, and five letters sent to him, have been

³⁸⁹ Ephraim b. Nissim: 711; Dunash b. Isaac: 204; Simhūn b. David: 221, a, l. 17; the letter of Ismaʿīl al-Tāhirtī: 121. The blessing for the deceased: 380, a, l. 16; Barhūn b. Isaac mentions his father also in 382, a, right margin, in August 1051; his demise is mentioned also by Ṣedāqā b. Zakariyyā in his letter to the deceased's brother, Ṣāliḡ b. Barhūn, in about 1050: 788, a, l. 6. His son, Barhūn, expresses his desire to bring his father's bones to Jerusalem for burial: 383, ll. 10-11: “...I shall send the bones over to you, and you will travel with them to Jerusalem, may God rebuild it”. Barhūn b. Isaac, his partnership with Nehorai: 380, a, ll. 6-8. *Dār al-birka*: 342, b; his letters: 377-386, 388. His stay in Qayrawān: the letter to him from the Sicilian Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār Madīnī: 648. Trade with the Tustaris and with Nehorai: 377, a, ll. 22 ff.; 378, ll. 10-12, wherein ones sees that the business is still continuing with Aaron b. Yāshār al-Tustari, the brother of Ḥesed; the killing of Abraham al-Tustarī: 379, a, l. 7ff.; Ḥesed was still alive at that time; further, in l. 35, the sorrow of the nagid, Judah b. Saadia, concerning what happened, is mentioned. The trade with Ḥesed continues: 380, a, ll. 31, 33, 37. The recommendation for ʿAyyāsh: 381, a, ll. 9-11. Goitein assumed that the special relationship between Barhūn b. Isaac and Nehorai can be explained by the fact that Barhūn was the husband of Nissim's sister, i.e. Nehorai's father's sister, and therefore he treated Nehorai as one treats a nephew; further, that Barhūn was hoping that Nehorai would marry his daughter. I cannot see any facts behind these assumptions; rather, the special relationship is explainable by the fact that Barhūn b. Isaac was Nehorai b. Nissim's cousin on his mother's side, i.e. Nehorai's mother was Barhūn (a) b. Ismaʿīl's daughter and the sister of Isaac, Barhūn's father; and it is Barhūn b. Isaac who introduced Nehorai to the Tustaris' trade, since, of all the Tāhirtīs, he was the one most involved in it. The letters of Nissim b. Isaac: 390-394; the letter of ʿAyyāsh: 484. Trade in soap: 392, a, l. 9.

preserved. His two first letters belong to the period of the sons of ʿAwkal, the first third of the century. The two others are from the beginning of the 50s. In the first period we find him traveling from the Maghrib to Fustat, while in the later period, around 1050, he was already living in Egypt. At about 1015, there was a dispute between him and Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal. The sons of Berekhiah mention it in their letter from Qayrawān to Ibn ʿAwkal, promising Ibn ʿAwkal that they would pressure Abūʿl-Khayr, i.e., Mūsā b. Barhūn, to give up; it appears that the dispute arose over arrangements for transferring money to the Babylonian yeshivot, because from a later letter of the sons of Berekhiah to Ibn ʿAwkal, we see that Mūsā b. Barhūn was already in Fustat, and that the eldest Tāhirtī, Ismaʿīl b. Barhūn, preferred sending the yeshiva money to him, and not to Ibn ʿAwkal; the sons of Berekhiah clearly present the opinion of the nagid of the Maghrib (Abraham b. ʿAṭāʾ) that Mūsā b. Barhūn hand over all the money to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal, in Fustat.

Mūsā b. Barhūn and his family first lived in the *sūq al-naḥḥāsīn* quarter of Fustat, the coppersmiths (or merchants in copper) market (naturally, the copper articles market is meant), in *dār al-birka*, where we see Nehorai b. Nissim sending his letters to Barhūn, Mūsā's eldest son, in 1051. Their business in Fustat was a money changer's store (*dukkān*; of Abūʿl-Khayr al-Ṣayrafi al-Yahūdī, located in the place called *sūq al-tammārīn*, apparently: the fruit sellers market). Nehorai b. Nissim, when in Būṣīr, writes to Barhūn b. Šālih, Mūsā b. Barhūn's brother's son, also to the *al-tammārīn*. Mūsā b. Barhūn's wife's name was apparently Umm al-Khayr. When Joseph b. Mūsā writes from Mahdiyya, to his brother Barhūn, then in Sūsa, he informs him that he wrote to Umm al-Khayr and Mubāraka, meaning, apparently: Barhūn's mother and his sister; Umm al-Khayr was apparently the first wife, or perhaps divorcee, of Mūsā b. Barhūn, mother of his eldest son, Barhūn. We also encounter his second wife, Umm Abī Saʿīd, mother of Abū Saʿīd, i.e., Joseph, the younger son. Barhūn b. Mūsā, writing in about 1045, apparently to his father, adds greetings "to Joseph and to his mother", also implying that this was his second wife, i.e., Barhūn and Joseph, the sons of Mūsā were, each one, the son of a different woman.

Mūsā b. Barhūn was apparently the brother-in-law (*ṣihr*) of ʿAwād (Abraham) b. Ḥananel. Nehorai b. Nissim mentions Abūʿl-Khayr, i.e., Mūsā al-Tāhirtī, in his letter to ʿAwād; Mūsā was then seriously ill, but he recovered; from this letter we learn about the family connection. We know about ʿAwād's sister, whose name was Sittāt, but we do not know whether the family relation was through this sister being Mūsā's wife. On the other hand, ʿAwād was married to a daughter of the Tāhirtīs, apparently, the daughter of Barhūn (a) b. Ismaʿīl, and was a *khāl*, maternal uncle, of Nehorai's; i.e., ʿAwād's wife and Nehorai's mother were sisters.

Mūsā and his son Barhūn had a special connection with Palestine. Mūsā even settled in Jerusalem in his twilight years, while Barhūn, his son, often traveled to Palestine from Egypt. Mūsā was even granted the title of *ḥavēv* by the Palestinian yeshiva; and he died in Jerusalem. There is a mention of a letter of his that arrived from Tinnīs, in the month of Elul, and it may be concluded that he was then on his way to Palestine. It appears Nehorai b. Nissim had an especial fondness for Mūsā and his son Barhūn, as it appears

in the greetings that he regularly sent them in his letters. Mūsā apparently died in 1056.³⁹⁰

(391) Both sons of Mūsā b. Barhūn were very active in international trade. ABŪ IŠĤAQ BARHŪN B. MŪSĀ, the eldest, apparently stayed in Alexandria most of the time, dealing with consignments and sea haulage. 19 letters and letter fragments of his are preserved in the Geniza, most of them from Alexandria, and most of them to Nehorai b. Nissim. A total of 22 letters from others to him have been preserved. He had a close connection with his father, and in a brief letter that he sent him, he promised to write him a letter every day. The scope of his business dealings included not only Sicily and the Maghrib, but also Palestine and Syria, and even reached Lādhīqiyya. He was also involved in community affairs in Fustat; in one of his letters he mentions payments “for the poor”, i.e., for the Fustat charitable foundation. He even volunteers and mobilizes his family to assist families in distress, such as the widow of ʿAwād b. Ḥananel, or Israel b. Nathan, who was in Jerusalem, and in a bad emotional state; he was thinking of traveling to Palestine to Israel b. Nathan, to have a heart-to-heart talk with him, and also to help him in his trying economic situation, also bringing in Israel’s brother, Nehorai b. Nathan, and his relative, Nehorai b. Nissim. Likewise, there is the matter of the assistance to ʿAyyāsh b. Šedāqā, who was interested in buying wheat; Barhūn, himself, was very busy, and he asks Nehorai to do it because they should help ʿAyyāsh. During his trip to the Maghrib, while staying in Sūsa, he made sure, together with his brother Joseph, to transfer money to Abraham b. Mūsā b. Barhūn, via a payment order to Barhūn b. Šālīḥ’s cousin; the payment order for the sum of 100 dirhams was already sent to the aforementioned, for the family of Barhūn b. Mūsā. His close cooperation with his brother Joseph in their mutual business dealings is clear from two letters that the two of them wrote from Mahdiyya to Nehorai b. Nissim, with similar content and no contradictions.

Barhūn b. Mūsā died on 16 August 1062, according to a letter of Šālīḥ b. Bahlūl, from Mahdiyya, to Nehorai b. Nissim; after a florid preamble, where he informs him of the death of “our Lord and Master Barhūn son of our Master Moses, of blessed memory”, he notes that he died on “Friday

³⁹⁰ The letters of Mūsā b. Barhūn: 128, 129, 337, 338; letters to him: 161 (to a female relative of his), 248, 339, 340, 702. See 132, l. 15 (about 1010): Abū’l-Khayr (Mūsā b. Barhūn) is in Qayrawān. The conflict with Ibn ʿAwkal: 146, a, ll. 39ff.; 148, a, ll. 19ff. In 1047 Mūsā b. Barhūn is one of the signatories of a court act written in Qayrawān, see 633. *Sūq al-naḥḥāsīn*: 247, b; *al-tammārīn*: 257b; 642b; Umm al-Khayr: 364, a, l. 26. Umm Abī Saʿīd: 397, d, l. 1. Regards to Joseph and his mother: 339, a, margin. Mūsā, *šīhr* of ʿAwād, and his illness: 263, a, ll. 5-11. The relations with ʿAwād: 344, a, l. 25; Sittāt ʿAwād’s sister, see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 173 (no. 482, b, ll. 3-4). Mūsā in Palestine with his son: *idem*, *Hist.*, 263, with more references. The letter from Tinnīs: 479, a, ll. 25-26: he arrived in Tinnīs one day before the *nayrūz*, i.e. at the end of August, in order to be in Jerusalem during the month of Tishri. Greetings to Mūsā and to his son: 545, a, l. 21: from all the Tāhirtis, greetings to the abovementioned and also to ʿAyyāsh b. Šedāqā. His demise: in 561, a, l. 35 there is mention of “Master Abū Ishaq Barhūn b. Mūsā of blessed memory”, meaning that the father is mentioned in the blessing for the departed in August 1056, whereas in December 1055 he is still dealing with changing dinars, see 515, a, ll. 18ff.; it also means that the letter of Abraham b. ʿAmram from Jerusalem, no. 513 in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 288ff., was written in 1056, not as printed there. The letter was written on 11 Kislev, which was November 21.

afternoon and was buried on the Sabbath eve.... which was on 8 Elul"; which is the above date.

ABŪ SA'ĪD JOSEPH B. MŪSĀ AL-TĀHIRTĪ, the younger of Mūsā's two sons, ran business deals especially with the Maghrib. 19 of his letters have been preserved in the Geniza, as have another ten, written to him by others. Most of his letters were written in Mahdiyya, but others, written in Egypt, have also been preserved. In his letters there is a kind of slogan regularly used by Mūsā's sons, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich" (Proverbs 10:22). As with the other great merchants, he also dealt with international consignments in his letters, as well as with haulage matters, by land and by sea, money transfer, accounts regarding shipments and marketing merchandise. His letters also include details about what was happening in the Maghrib; he asks about his nephew, his sister's son 'Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā, whose mother was Mūsā al-Tāhirtī's mother's daughter, and in one of his letters to his brother Barhūn, he asks Barhūn to take care of 'Ayyāsh because he deserved the attention; above, we have seen how Barhūn acted in this matter. He also cared for the family of someone in the Tāhirtī family who had died, as well as for that person's daughters after both their parents died. He sends Nehorai b. Nissim clothing that had belonged to his daughter to give it *'alā l-yatāmā*, to the orphans, in Jerusalem; this might have to do with family members. Joseph has a great deal of cooperation with Nehorai and with 'Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā. We find them purchasing flax together in Būṣīr, packing it and dealing with its shipment along the Nile to Fustat. He displays much loyalty to a regular partner (also a family member), Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī, when he became embroiled in a dispute about a clothing consignment with Khallūf b. Mūsā al-Ṣā'igh; "you are well aware", he writes to Yūsha' b. Nathan, "of the matter of Khallūf, who is a thief". Joseph traveled often to different places in the Maghrib, and also to Sicily and Spain. We have no other details about him; in a letter of Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl to Nehorai b. Nissim we read that a grandson was born to him: "a letter has arrived from our Master Joseph where he writes that his son has been given a male child", followed by blessings. Sometimes Joseph ran into difficult situations on his travels, such as in Sūsa, when he was trapped inside the city when it was besieged. I have already mentioned the close cooperation between him and his half-brother, Barhūn. In his "full and complete" will, Barhūn made sure to appoint his brother Joseph as guardian of his only son, Moses, and the rest of the family (certainly meaning the daughters). Joseph lived on after his brother, but we have no details about when he died.³⁹¹

³⁹¹ The letters of Barhūn b. Mūsā: 339-356; see also his letter from Jerusalem, written in about 1045 to Nehorai b. Nissim, containing matters of trade: cloths, wool, flax; see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 96-101 (no. 458); written to him: 209, 247, 250-253, 287, 316, 332, 333, 364, 443, 461, 480-482, 546, 597, 611, 649, 696, 810. A letter every day: 340; Lādhīqiyya: 341; payments to the pious foundation (*heqdēsh*): 348, a, margin; aid for the widow of 'Awād: *ibid.*; to Israel b. Nathan: *ibid.*, a, ll. 9ff.; 'Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā: 349, b, l. 2. Aid for his father: 363, a, l. 9; to the family: *ibid.*, l. 28. The letters to Nehorai: 365, 366. The letter of Ṣāliḥ b. Bahlūl: 782, and see there the note about the date. Earlier, on dates that are certain: mentioned in 596, 7 December 71060; 781, 18 December 1061; 668, August 1062. Joseph b. Mūsā's letters: 357-365, 367-376; the *'alāma*: e.g., 361. Care for 'Ayyāsh: 364, b, ll. 3ff.; care for the orphan girls: 368, b, lines 37ff.; sends garments: 369, a, l. 18; flax in Būṣīr: 370. The journey to Spain: 359, and cf. the letter of 'Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā: 476, b, l. 5. The matter

8. *Nehorai b. Nissim*

(392) Nehorai was undoubtedly the leading personality in Fustat Jewry, and Egyptian Jewry, in general, in the second half of the eleventh century. Anyone assuming that this impression is the result of the coincidence of the preservation of letters in the Geniza, as most of the commercial letters that we have originate in his archive, or are letters of his partners and relatives, would be mistaken. It is not coincidence that leads us to ascribe such centrality to him, but a great many expressions of contemporaries, showing his important status in the period's commerce and his involvement in community affairs. One does not have to be an expert in calligraphy to admire his steady hand and the beauty of his script, which reflect, so it seems, a balanced character, inner peace, resolve and perseverance; and his language is always exact. If we take definite, not just presumed, dates into account, his letters were written over a period of 20 years, from 1046 to 1065; however, the break in the existence of letters in his hand does not signal a break in activity, what caused it was the blindness that afflicted him. The number of letters found, written by him, totals 64, and the letters written to him—294. More than a third (37%) of the letters in my collection are from Nehorai's 'archive', i.e., what he wrote and what was written to him; the total number of documents in his 'archive' is 358; in the future it may be possible to identify some others.

Abū Yahyā Nehorai b. Nissim (the name should be pronounced Nehorai, for the name is found in the talmudic literature; it was customary to write the name without vowels, but the transliteration Nahray is incorrect) was a Maghribi in origin, in one place he is referred to as: *al-tājir al-maghribī*, the Maghribi merchant.

Nehorai was a Tāhirtī on his mother's side; his mother was the sister of the four 'second' generation Tāhirtī brothers. His belonging to the Tāhirtīs is well reflected in theirs and his many letters. I have already shown that Barhūn b. Isaac was the person who took him under his wing when he arrived in Egypt, and paved the way for his ties with the Tustaris. This fact is also reflected in the letter of Khalfa b. Isaac, father of the three merchant brothers (Maymūn, Joseph, Judah) to Nehorai b. Nissim, that he wrote about 1045, shortly after Nehorai arrived in Egypt. The writer was very close to Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhirtī—his agent, or partner. He mentions to Nehorai that it was he who had educated him and his (the writer's) high status with Barhūn b. Isaac—all this so that Nehorai would help him market beads. Thus it seems that in this earlier period Nehorai was kind of a protégé of Barhūn b. Isaac. Later we find Nehorai active in partnership with some of his Tāhirtī cousins, especially with the two sons of Mūsā, Barhūn and Joseph; for example, in an account compiled in 1059, we read about his deals with the two brothers in marketing a great many and variety of goods, flax (mainly from Būšīr), ammoniac, carnelian, and tar (from Mosul); in Alexandria they had the assistance of Abraham b. Farrāh and Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī. Payment for the consignments arrived in pouches from Mahdiyya via various emissaries, Mardūkḥ b. Mūsā, Baruch

of Khallūf: 371, a, l. 12. The birth of the grandson: 315, a, margin; retained in Sūsa: 344, a, l. 4; guardian for the legacy of his brother: 782, a, ll. 3ff.

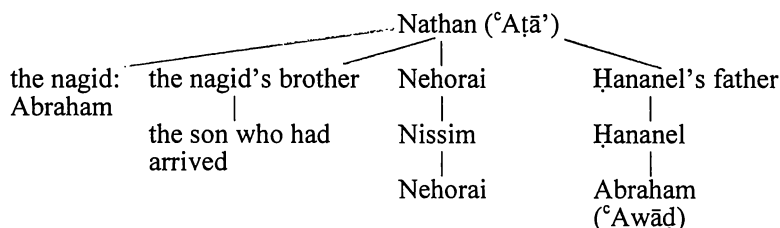
b. al-Shāma, Ḥayyim b. °Ammār. Their activities extended to the south of Italy, and mentioned are quarter dinars, *malafī*, from Amalfi. Usually, the business dealings in partnership with the sons of Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī were cordial, and the mutual trust virtually unlimited; I say 'virtually', because there were occasional reservations, or warnings, such as what Barhūn b. Mūsā writes from Iṭrābanish (Trapani) in Sicily, in about 1053: "my brother, you know how much love I have for you and your standing with me; yet if there be sloppiness in the purchases that I need, I will arrange for my brother Abū Sa'īd (i.e., Joseph) to come or I will come myself". The ties with the Tāhīrtīs are also clear in Nehorai's concern for family members in distress, such as what Nissim b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī wrote him shortly after the death of his elder brother, Barhūn b. Isaac, about "the friendship and love.... and also to fulfill the wishes of my sister.... in this matter.... she likes you very much and says so to me all the time: for me he is as if your brother"; and further along: "for you are for these children of the deceased, may he rest in peace, more than I myself.... because for the deceased, of blessed memory, there was (no difference) between me and you... and I have seen you (interest yourself) in their state, in general, and ask about what was going on with them".³⁹²

(393) Nehorai's mother remained in the Maghrib. From an accounts list Nehorai wrote in 1046, we learn about a shipment of flax and sea shells meant for her; thus she dealt in trade: "a small *shakāra* for my mother and sea shells for her, half a dinar". In the same place he also mentions his sister, who had died, and a debt was left of a dinar and a carat and-a-half, for nuts. Nissim b. Isaac, in his above letter to Nehorai, mentions that "for this reason, my Lord, there was a need for the rebuke your mother gave you, which you write that you read.... she took note of my heartache because of you"—the details are not clear because of the state of the manuscript but we may assume that Nehorai had accused Nissim for not caring enough for the family (especially for Nissim's deceased brother's children), therefore Nehorai's mother rebuked him in her letter. His mother

³⁹² See the accountings: 273, 274, dated to 1046, and 296, dated to 1065; if we consider dates that are approximate as well, we could perhaps expand the period by a couple of years; his letters: 240-292, 294-301, 839; and in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 271-277: nos. 508, 509. My present collection, in *Be-malkhūt*, includes 251 letters written to him, while 43 are in my book on Palestine, see the index there at the end of vol. III. Besides, Nehorai is mentioned in many letters which do not belong to his 'archives', as one can see in the indexes of my *Palest.* and *Be-malkhūt*; no doubt, more mention of him like these can be found outside of my collections, such as a fragment of a deed written in Siwan Sel. 1391 (May-June 1080): TS 8.251, in which he is one of the witnesses. The first work of gathering Nehorai's letters was done by M. Michaeli, in his dissertation (1967) written under the supervision of S.D. Goitein, where he gathered 261 documents and, as mentioned by Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, in the "author's note", p. xviii, many more letters were extant in the Geniza; *ibid.*, III, 161, he wrote: "we have over two hundred and fifty letters addressed to, or written by, Nahray b. Nissim"; in fact we already have close to 360. التاجر المغربي: 783, in the address, cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 438 n. 18. See the spelling Nehorai in the letter of Isaac b. David b. Sughmār, 611, a, l. 1; see also the letter of Jacob b. Nahum, 691, where he wrote the name in the address (in Arabic script): Nahūray (as it would be pronounced by an Arab); also, the letter of Shelah b. Mevasser, 790, in the address: Nehōray; and in the letter of °Amram b. Joseph, 676, a, l. 1: "our Lord and Master Nehōray". Khalfa b. Isaac: 560; Khalfa had connections with the Tustaris, and he asks Nehorai to inform Ḥesed al-Tustarī about the details of the deal with the beads. The accounting in 1059 (with details covering three years): 287. The letter of Barhūn: 344, a, margin; the letter of Nissim b. Isaac: 389, a, ll. 14ff.

adds more details in her name at the end of that letter, among other things reassuring him, "because I no longer have any (complaint) in my heart". The letter was from Sūsa, and it is clear that Nehorai's mother was also staying there, even though her regular residence was apparently in Qayrawān, as Israel b. Nathan, Nehorai's paternal cousin confirms, noting that Nehorai's mother and sister were together in Qayrawān. At about the same time, Nehorai blesses Mardūkh b. Mūsā: "may (God) bring you together with your mother". His mother was in Qayrawān with her sister, i.e., Nehorai's aunt (on his mother's side, *khāla*); this may mean °Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā's mother. Also mentioned is the son of Nehorai's sister, the sister who died. Nehorai mentions him long afterwards, in the 60s, in an account that he compiled.

On his father's side, Nehorai was a descendant of the family of the nagid of the Maghrib at the beginning of the eleventh century, Abraham b. °Aṭā' (Nathan). Abraham (°Awād) b. Ḥananel informs Nehorai, in a letter he wrote from Alexandria in about 1060, about the arrival of "our uncle (on his father's side), the nephew of the *nagid*", in Alexandria (apparently from the Maghrib). The assumed family tree would thus be as follows:



I.e., Nehorai's and Abraham-°Awād's grandfathers were brothers of the nagid. Nissim, Nehorai's father, and Ḥananel, Abraham-°Awād's father, were cousins.

Nehorai's father, Nissim, was thus from Qayrawān. In the address of a letter written by Isaac b. Lanjū, from Mahdiyya, in about 1062, we read: Abū Yahyā Nehorai b. R. Nissim, the righteous, of blessed memory, Qarawī, i.e., from Qayrawān. The father Nissim's *kunya* was: Abū Zikrī. Israel b. Joseph b. Bānūqā mentions him in a letter that he wrote from Qayrawān to Nehorai in Fustat, apparently around 1040, at the beginning of Nehorai's stay in Egypt; Nehorai was in Egypt together with his father, and we read in that letter: "the letter of our Lord and Master Abū Zikrī, your father, has arrived, may God grant him peace, and he writes therein that he sold the beads, and when you arrive (in Fustat, apparently from Alexandria) the remainder will be sold. I have no doubt that you handled their sale together with him".

Nehorai b. Nissim's marriage is mentioned in a letter written to him by his cousin, Israel b. Nathan, from Jerusalem, on 11 January 1052. He confirms the receipt of a letter from Nehorai, written towards the end of 1051, adding: "you wrote me in your letter that you married into the family of al-Kohen, something which greatly gladdened me, because there are none better than they in Fustat" etc. We also read a similar blessing in the letter of Mevasser b. David, writing from Tinnīs: "I am happy about the news of the alliance.... may you warrant (being in) the book of life" etc;

until now it was concerning the engagement. The nuptials apparently took place some years later, because there are blessings, from Isma'īl b. Farah, in a letter of 25 September 1056, from Tinnīs; and from Elia b. Judah b. Yahyā from Alexandria. Two women relatives of Nehorai were Umm Sha'ūl and Sutayt, but we have no details that would enable us to determine exactly where they belonged.

The identity of the *kōhanim* who became the in-laws of Nehorai can be established with the aid of a letter of Nehorai, sent to Abū'l-Faraj Daniel ha-Kohen b. °Allān. This Daniel ha-Kohen is mentioned in several letters of Nehorai, where he calls him "Abū'l-Faraj my *šihr*", i.e., he was Nehorai's brother-in-law, the brother of Nehorai's wife. In a letter to him he is praised by Nehorai for his handling of the matter of Jewish captives brought to Alexandria. The brothers-in-law, brothers of Nehorai's wife, are mentioned in a letter of Joseph b. Semariah, the *dayyān* of Barqa, writing to Nehorai in ca. 1053: "the sons of the Kohen, his in-laws" (*ashāruhu*); at the end of his letter, Barhūn b. Šālīḥ, who writes to Nehorai, adds regards °alā mawāliyya al-kōhanīm, "to my masters the *kōhanim*".

In a number of letters there are congratulations for Nehorai on the birth of a son; it may be inferred that such blessings would have arrived not only after the birth of his son, but also when his wife's pregnancy became known. Wishes for a son were sent by Joseph b. °Alī Kohen Fāsī, Mevasser b. David, and Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy. We do not have the exact date of the birth of his son, Nissim, Abū Sa'd, but it appears to have been around 1060. Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūrī wished Nehorai that God give him happiness with his children "and may soon show him their happiness". We do indeed know about two children, a son and a daughter—Abū Sa'd Nissim and Mansūkha—about whose wellbeing °Awād b. Hananel expresses happiness. Nehorai's cousin, Nehorai b. Nathan (Israel's brother) sends consolation over the death of a daughter, and wishes that he soon have a son; she appears to have been a young child, who died before Nissim's birth. Nehorai's relative, Nathan b. Nehorai b. Nathan, mentions Nissim a number of times in one of his letters, shortly after his birth, and he asks for pink cloth to make a garment for him. Some years later he again asks about him in every letter; Nathan's little son, Nehorai, continually asks "when will our Master Abū Sa'd come", i.e., little Nissim, and asks that he be brought to him (they live in Alexandria), and they tell him that they are in the synagogue and "will come soon". In one of his letters Nathan expresses concern over the young Nissim's illness about which he had learned. We have some information about Nissim after he grew up; Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy mentions him in a letter to the gaon Abiathar ha-Kohen: Nehorai b. Nissim and also his son Nissim send greetings to the gaon. Nehorai's daughter, apparently the aforementioned Mansūkha, married, over which °Awād b. Hananel congratulates Nehorai. It appears that his son, Nissim, also married, and we see °Amram b. Joseph sending wishes to Nehorai that he have happiness from his son, meaning apparently: that a grandson be born. °Amram repeats the blessing in another letter, from

which we also learn about Nissim's recuperation from a serious illness; ³⁹³Amram also repeats his wishes in a third letter.

(394) We have a letter of condolence written by Mawhūb, the *ḥazzān* b. Aaron the *ḥazzān*, of Alexandria, to Nehorai b. Nissim upon his wife's death; this letter talks of the mother of Abū Sa'd (i.e., Nissim), the "chaste able and righteous woman", "of whose example there are few"; the writer mentions "her goodness and piety". Except for two letters that he wrote to Nehorai, we find the aforementioned Mawhūb signed on a deed of 1076, and on a court document, of 2 March 1085. It is clear that the two letters, including that of condolence, were written in the 1070s.

Nehorai took a second wife, SITT AL-MUNĀ, DAUGHTER OF NATHAN, at an unknown time. On 10 November 1108, we find her buying from Sitt al-

³⁹³ The transport to the mother: 273, b, ll. 3, 16. It emerges from this accounting that Nehorai managed to collect monies in Qayrawān before he left it, and possibly one might deduce that his departure from the Maghrib occurred at the beginning of the 40's. Nissim b. Isaac and Nehorai's mother: 389, a, ll. 23ff.; b, ll. 2-5. See also 754, where Joseph b. Abraham writes to Nehorai from the Maghrib, about her great worries; but she relaxed upon receiving a letter from him, and was in excellent state. The writer takes care of her and continually inquires about her well-being (l. 6). Israel b. Nathan: 408, b, l. 1; Mardūkh b. Mūsā: 526, a, l. 7, and also at the end of the letter, b, l. 7. The mother's sister: 764, a, l. 21; the son of the sister: 281, l. 6. The letter of Abraham (ʿAwād) b. Ḥananel (about the arrival of their mutual uncle): 569, b, l. 2. Nissim Qarawī: 737; Israel b. Joseph: 233, a, ll. 3ff. The letter of Israel b. Nathan: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 128 (no. 467); cf. *idem*, *Hist.*, 262; I relinquish my conjecture that the daughter of the family of *kōhanīm* was not his first wife, since no proof exists for it. Mevasser b. David: 692, a, ll. 4ff. Ismaʿīl b. Farah: 492, a, ll. 2-3; Elia b. Judah: 705, b, ll. 4-6. Umm Shaʿūl is also mentioned in the letter of Israel b. Nathan, from Jerusalem, of December 31 1061, when she is also in Jerusalem, see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 165f. (no. 480, a, ll. 12-14). The letter to Daniel b. ʿAllān: 265, see the index in vol. IV of *Be-malkhūt*, under Daniel b. ʿAllān. The letter of Joseph b. Shemariah: 734, a, l. 12. Barhūn b. Šālih: 328, b, l. 8; Goitein, *Letters*, 290f., finds proof in 280—an account presented by Nehorai to Abū Sahl b. al-Kohen—and in 302—a matter of rental regarding the son of ʿAlī b. al-Kohen; Nehorai's brother-in-law—that Nehorai was married to the sister of Manasseh ha-Kohen b. Abraham, the son-in-law of Solomon b. Judah, the Palestinian gaon; this he mentions also in his *Ha-yishshūv*, 148 n. 55 (a letter to Daniel b. ʿAzariah first edited by him in *Shalem*, 2 (1975/6), where he refers to Abū Sahl ha-Kohen who is mentioned in that letter; however, it is nowhere stated that Nehorai married Manasseh ha-Kohen's sister, or that he was his brother-in-law; as to the son of ʿAlī ha-Kohen mentioned in 302, he is probably David ha-Kohen, the brother-in-law (brother of the wife) of Nehorai; see 695, in the address, where it says that Nehorai is the *ših*r (son-in-law) of al-Kohen al-Šayrafi; who is probably that ʿAllān ha-Kohen; or, if by *ših*r the brother-in-law is meant here, that Kohen was Nehorai's brother-in-law; and what I wrote in *Hist.*, 682, accordingly requires correcting; as also in *Palest.*, II, 740 (no. 399, the note to l. 24), and III, 183 (the preamble to no. 486, the letter of the daughter of the head of the yeshiva). Joseph b. ʿAlī ha-Kohen: 400, b, ll. 1, 5; Mevasser b. David: 694, a, l. 3; Mūsā b. Abī'l-Hayy: 449, a, l. 18; Yeshūʿa b. Ismaʿīl: 314, l. 8. The *kunya* of Nissim was Abū Sa'd, not Abū'l-Faraj as I wrote: Gil, *Palest.*, III, see the index there. ʿAwād b. Ḥananel: 567, a, l. 9, b; 568, b, l. 17 and margin. Nehorai b. Nathan: 411, l. 15. Nathan b. Nehorai: 423, a, ll. 4-6; also: 424, b, ll. 2-3; Nissim is sick: 427, ll. 15, 20. Nissim b. Nehorai sends greetings to the gaon: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 366 (no. 551, l. 20); see more mention gathered by Mann, *Jews*, II, 245-248; see the colophon of Nissim b. Nehorai inscribed on a quire of which one sheet is preserved: TS 10 K 18.6. In ENA 2805, f. 15, which is a fragment to be read together with Bodl MS Heb b. 13, f. 19 (a record of a deposition, written by Abraham b. Isaac ha-Talmīd), there is this signature: "Nissim, son of Master Nehorai, the *rav*, may God protect him" (i.e. Nehorai is still alive). The marriage of the daughter: 572, margin. ʿAmram b. Joseph: 675, a, l. 11; 677, a, ll. 10, 26-28; 679, b, l. 8, where he uses the formula: "may God protect them (plural!) for you", probably referring to Nissim and his sister, Mansūkha. Cf. on ʿAmram b. Joseph of Alexandria, who was involved in the India trade: Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 401 n. 17.

Aqrān daughter of Joseph ha-Kohen, the Nubian maidservant, Naʿīm. Sitt al-Munā, in the deed of purchase, is referred to as: “the widow of our Lord and Master Nehorai the *rav* par excellence, of blessed memory”.

AL-KABĪRA is a figure somewhat of a mystery, who was most clearly related to Nehorai's family. She is often mentioned in the 1060s, in the letters of Israel b. Nathan and of ʿĀvōn b. Ṣedāqā, from Jerusalem, to Nehorai b. Nissim; the first one sends his greetings, and below—when she arrived to stay in Jerusalem with Nehorai's wife—ʿĀvōn sends Nehorai greetings from her. Both Israel and ʿĀvōn send greetings to al-Kabīra along with greetings to Nehorai's brothers-in-law on his wife's side (his *aṣḥār*). Nehorai wrote to her, in Jerusalem, and Israel read her the letter; in ʿĀvōn's letter we find her name: Sitt Muruwwa, as well as her *kunya*: Umm Abī ʿImrān. ʿĀvōn wrote to her, from Jerusalem to Fustat, asking Nehorai to read her his letter. In my collection she is often mentioned in many of the letters of Nathan b. Nehorai, the son of a cousin of Nehorai b. Nissim, writing from Alexandria and adding greetings from her (along with greetings from Nehorai's brothers-in-law). In one of the letters, Nathan requests that ʿImrān be informed that his sister is well; in another letter he forwards thanks from al-Kabīra to Nehorai and his son Nissim, asking that Raḥamīm be asked about her daughter. Another letter contains greetings that he sends in her name to Nehorai, after the greetings of ʿAmram and of Abraham. Al-Kabīra dealt in trade—so it seems—and the matter of a bundle of silk that Nehorai was supposed to sell for her is mentioned in a letter to Nehorai from ʿAwād b. Ḥananel, as well as in a fragment of a letter from al-Kabīra herself (not in her own handwriting, of course). One should note that the term, *al-kabīra*, usually indicates an eldest sister. To me it seems likely, though still in the realm of an assumption, that al-Kabīra, Sitt Muruwwa, was Nehorai's sister; we find her personally accompanying Nehorai's wife; dealing in commerce; living in Alexandria; it seems to me that she was ʿAmram's wife-divorcee; of ʿAmram it was said that he was the brother-in-law (*ṣihr*) of Nehorai (because he was married to Nehorai's sister). A family relation by the name of ʿAmram (with no further details) is often mentioned in the letters of Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl al-Makhmūrī and Nathan b. Nehorai, and others; he, too, was in the silk trade; there is mention of the death of a son of his. Also mentioned is ʿAmram's son, Raḥamīm (one cannot know if this was the son who died, or another son); mentioning this son, are Nehorai b. Nissim, Nathan b. Nehorai, ʿAwād b. Ḥananel, and others, and a letter of Raḥamīm to Nehorai b. Nissim has been preserved; one of the letters says that he brought silk to Alexandria. It is likely, that if Raḥamīm had a son, he was named ʿAmram, after his grandfather, thus Raḥamīm would be known as Abū ʿImrān, and perhaps from here al-Kabīra's *kunya*: Umm Abī ʿImrān.³⁹⁴

³⁹⁴ The condolences: 756; another letter of his: 757; the deed: 844; the act of court: 623; the sale of the slave woman: 303; Goitein believed that Nehorai had been married to three women, see *Med. Soc.*, III, 161; also, he believed that there is in 411, a, l. 21, proof that Sitt al-Munā b. Nathan (who bought the Nubian slave woman) was a cousin of Nehorai b. Nissim, since she was Nehorai b. Nathan's sister. This he deduced from the fact that Nehorai b. Nathan sent greetings (probably from Qayrawān), to Nehorai b. Nissim: “my sister and the girls send you greetings”; in my opinion, his assumption is unfounded, see *ibid.*, 461 n. 4, and also: p. 273, where he repeats it. See *ibid.*, 30f., the conjecture that the wife of Nehorai

(395) Nehorai b. Nissim enjoyed great esteem and unusual distinction among the groups of merchants dealing in international trade, most of them Maghribis; he was knowledgeable and wise, diligent, assiduous and faithful. He himself writes: "...since I am busy, and no transactions in Fustat can be completed except by perseverance and diligence". He displays considerable self-confidence; he writes to his cousin, Barhūn b. Šālih: "if you were here you wouldn't have done what I did for your merchandise". But more than praising himself, others praise him, such as the exceeding praise of Isma'īl b. Faraḥ: "....for you fill the heart with joy with everything you touch, one enjoys you and your pleasant nature". Aside from his knowledge and acuity in commercial matters, he was also considered to be a complete expert in currency dealings. For example, when Sulaymān b. Faraḥ al-Qābisī was not certain about the quality of the dinars that he received for silk, he turned to Nehorai to examine their quality and value when they were exchanged in Fustat, asking that he exchange the dinars that became green and the flawed ones. Contemporary merchants trusted him fully, and gave him a free hand in dealing with their money and their business investments. There was a case of two partners awaiting a pouch of money (*ṣurra*) from Nehorai, and in order for there not to be any claims against one another, they drew up an agreement between them, in the presence of a witness, Abraham b. Farrāḥ, in which they agreed to give Nehorai a free hand to send them the money as he saw fit. An anonymous merchant, writing to Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī, from Alexandria to Fustat, insisted

b. Nissim, who in his opinion was Nehorai b. Nathan's sister, and the daughters (of Nehorai b. Nissim, he believes) stayed with his cousin in Alexandria; while I think that the cousin writes from the Maghrib, not Alexandria, and he was the brother of Israel b. Nathan; there was a deep conflict between these two brothers about the inheritance, which was being held by the elder brother (in the Maghrib), i.e. by Nehorai b. Nathan; one may deduce from the version of the latter's letter, 411, ll. 18-19, that he would prefer to leave that place "since no family remained (?) in this place"; this was written from Qayrawān, which was emptying of Jews in the 1050's. Goitein, *ibid.*, 273, and 487 n. 140, also believed, based on the abovementioned letter of condolences, 756, that "Nehorai b. Nissim had married, while still young, a cousin from Tūnis, whereas the condolences refer to his Egyptian wife". To my mind, no proof exists that there was indeed a third wife. Nehorai's two wives were—as far as we can learn from the documents before us—the daughter of the 'priestly' family, whose name we do not know, the mother of his son Nissim and of his daughter, Mansūkha; that wife passed away in the 1070's; and he married Sitt al-Munā b. Nathan, mentioned in 1108, who was, as noted above, his second wife. Also, what I wrote: Gil, *Hist.*, 261f., should be corrected, and Friedman, *PAAJR*, 49 (1982), 37 as well, who understood 411 as Goitein did, and also Friedman, *Ribḥiyy n.*, 5f. and n. 12; Ben Sasson, *Šiṣīya*, no. 101, read in 348, a, right margin, l. 21: *kallatekhā* (meaning: your daughter-in-law; but in Judeo Arabic Geniza letters one would expect: *zawja ibnika*, your son's wife) instead of the correct *kḥālatak*, your maternal aunt, deducing without basis that Nehorai had a son from his first wife, who married, while this daughter-in-law of Nehorai and her daughter (i.e. Nehorai's granddaughter) remained in Qayrawān, and the son probably died. Mention of al-Kabīra, see Gil, *Palest.*, III, in the index (under Sitt Muruwwa), and in the index of *Be-malkhūl*, in vol. IV (under al-Kabīra); Nehorai wrote to her: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 174f. (no. 483, a, ll. 37); Sitt Muruwwa, *ibid.*, 239, 241 (no. 500, b, l. 9, and right margin). Āvōn wrote to her: Gil, *ibid.*, 255 (no. 503, b, ll. 9-11). The news for 'Imrān: 416, b, margin. Thanking Nehorai and his son: 419, a, ll. 18-20; the letter of 'Awād: 570, a, l. 25; the fragment of al-Kabīra's letter: 825. See what I wrote on al-Kabīra: Gil, *Hist.*, 261f., which is to be corrected according to the present discussion. 'Amram: see the index in my *Be-malkhūl*, IV; deals silk: 424, a, l. 10; Nehorai's *ṣihr*: 438, a, l. 15, where the death of his son is mentioned as well. Raḥamīm b. 'Amram: see the index, *ibid.*; Nehorai's letter: 606; transporting silk to Alexandria: 428, a, l. 11.

that Nehorai be present during the sale of his pearls (the *mirjān*), implying that he (Nehorai) was the only one he trusted. Usually, his business partners, who would send him goods to be marketed in Fustat, expected him to be present at the sale. Thus, for example, when Nissim b. Ḥalfon sent merchandise in the name of the representative of merchants (*wakīl al-tujjār*), he demanded that Nehorai be present and supervise the sale. It was known that Nehorai was always strict about the quality of the merchandise. Ezra b. Hillel sent him 50 dinars from Alexandria, not negotiable there, but valid and perfect in Fustat; he asked Nehorai to exchange them for good *shāmī musaṭṭara* dinars, "as you are used to". When coins went out of circulation, usually by order of the authorities, Nehorai would make sure to send pouches of money to places where they could still be exchanged. Thus, for example, we find that he sent to Ḍvōn b. Ṣedāqā, a Maghribi merchant (of Qābis) who moved to Jerusalem, *rubāʿiyya*, quarter dinars, to be exchanged there. Ḍvōn describes, in four letters to Nehorai, the difficulties he encountered when trying to exchange them.

Nehorai was an easy traveler, at any rate, in his good years he traveled often—to the Maghrib, Palestine, the flax centers in Egypt, and Alexandria. Thus, for example, we learn from a letter of Joseph b. ʿAlī Kohen Fāsī, that (at about 1055) Nehorai made trips to Tripoli of Libya and Būṣīr; Nathan b. Nehorai (at about 1065) writes that Nehorai was in Malīj, in the Delta. A place where he apparently spent much time was Būṣīr, the great flax growing center; he also traveled to other centers, such as Munaymūn; a local man, Saʿīd b. Yūnus, writes about his visit; sometimes he had to buy flax second hand because it was difficult (for unclear reasons) to purchase it from the growers. A glance at one of his accounts shows that Nehorai bought flax from different areas of Egypt—the Delta, Central Egypt, and Upper Egypt—for his partners and members of his group. He wrote separate accounts for each pouch of coins that the partners gave him. He records what each peasant, the flax grower, received; these, apparently, were advance payments, because many of them are identical. The local governor, the ʿāmil Ibn ʿAllān, also trusted Nehorai, and invested 45 dinars in a flax purchasing project. The local *qāḍī* was also one of the sellers; however, many of the names are of Christians: Tūdar, Tiyādār, Markus, Sargas, obviously Copts.

Aside from the direct commerce and currency and exchange dealings, Nehorai was also a debt collector, usually through a power of attorney sent to him from distant places; for instance, he writes about this topic to Farah b. Ismaʿīl. All these dealings were not a small blessing for him, and there is no doubt that Nehorai was a wealthy man; it seems, however, that at a certain point it became too much, and we find his cousin Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrī (also in the name of his brother, Joseph b. Mūsā) writing to him, among other things, that: "I no longer have the strength to fulfill all those people's requests, but they do not accept it, because of your fame, may God add to you; (but) I don't want to feel pressured by all those who rely on you....". Nevertheless, it appears that he was not always successful, especially because of the lack of political stability—a virtually chronic state of revolts and wars at different corners of the Mediterranean Sea. For example, there is the letter of Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, writing to Nehorai from Alexandria, in November 1062, stating: "....afterwards I learned about your

losses in this blessed year from which I also suffered.... this year, especially, in which no one escaped harm; may God quickly find for us and for you a substitute, and make this also an atonement for you and provide you and us with a blessing from here on". There were also occasional disputes with partners, and it is difficult to determine who was in the right because usually only one side's story is extant. Maymūn b. Khalfa writes to Nehorai from Palermo, in August 1056, complaining that Nehorai was demanding for himself part of the consignment of a Sicilian, Sulaymān b. Saul: ".... your letter has arrived, may God guard you, where you asked me that you be sent a third of the value of the loads (certainly: of flax); but is it not something unacceptable done in commercial dealings?". His argument was that the person who had given him the money had not warned him (that it was not an ordinary loan) that someone had a part in this transaction. Maymūn sings the praises of Sulaymān b. Saul who always acted properly and with great dedication, even endangering himself for the merchandise when he waited alone on the coast at a time when no Jew dared be there. There is also a recollection of a dispute with a Christian in the documents, in the letter of Mevasser b. David, from Damsīs, in the Delta region: "...you also wrote in your letters that arrived via Salāma, about what happened to you regarding the uncircumcised one, may God only remember him according to what was due to him, and I was sorry about your troubles with him. What you told him was true, as ʿAllūn would say, because he is an uncircumcised one and we are Jews, and he also has no power of attorney and nothing else that is required; he paid what it was worth, and what is the worth of what he says?....". The Christian apparently claimed that he (or the one who sent him) paid more than what he actually did.

There is reason to assume that Nehorai was not a spendthrift. Abraham b. Farrāh, writing at about 1050 to Isaac b. ʿAlī al-Majjāni, informs him, among other things, that he had asked Nehorai for a dinar for the synagogue (apparently: the synagogue of 'the Babylonians' in Fustat), but was turned down; Nehorai claimed that he did not have any money. Moreover: a relative of Nehorai's, who had worked for him for eight months, complains in his letter that he received no more than 15 dirhams for his work during that time. The Maghribis in Fustat "found it difficult (to accept)".³⁹⁵

³⁹⁵ Praise of his perseverance: 252, a, ll. 19-20; to Barhūn b. Sālih: 257, a, ll. 15-16; Ismaʿīl b. Farah: 488, a, ll. 7f.; Sulaymān b. Farah: 537, b, ll. 8ff.; trust of the merchants: 764, a, ll. 17-18; sale of pearls: 810, a, margin; Nissim b. Ḥalfōn: 586, a, ll. 8-9, dinars from Alexandria: 773, a, ll. 5ff.; on the change of the *rubāʿiyya* see the letters of Avōn b. Šedāqā, in Gil, *Palest.*, III, 225-250 (no. 498, b, l.1; 499, ll. 4-5; 500, al, ll. 31-32). These quarter dinars of Nehorai's served as the original, main foundation for the view that a Jewish quarter existed in north Jerusalem during the early Muslim period, due to the claim that *rubāʿiyya* means a city square, although the Arabic word for city square is *murabbaʿa*. Though that opinion had already been shown to be wrong, primarily by Goitein, *Med Soc.*, I, 378, the "northern quarter" conjecture became something of an official designation, and the quarter which never existed is solemnly located on maps of Jerusalem in the early Middle Ages. See, concerning this, the discussion in Gil, *Hist.*, 636-639, with more references. Joseph b. ʿAlī: 398, b, l. 6; Malīj: 425, a, l. 5. Visits in Būšīr: 531; in Munaymūn: 772, a, l.9. The letter of Farah b. Ismaʿīl: 225; TS NS 324.113, a fragment of a letter from Nathan b. Yūshaʿ b. Nathan, contains a request that Nehorai put pressure on Nathan's father Yūshaʿ, to send him the *barāʿa* (confirmation of receipt) for the poll tax, see Oudeh's dissertation, no. 38. Nehorai's accounting: 300. See on Nehorai's frequent visits to Būšīr, in order to acquire flax, also 381, the letter of Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī, October 1049, from Mahdiyya, to

(396) When starting out in Egypt, Nehorai lived in a house belonging to Abū Sahl (apparently Manasseh) ha-Kohen, paying him 30 dinars for two years' rent, i.e., a dinar-and-a-quarter per month. Later we find the information that in the mid 50s, Nehorai rented an apartment (*qā'a*) in *qaṣr al-sham'*, and was getting ready to move there, with his family, on the first of Elul (the letter was written on 21 Av, i.e., 10 days earlier). A court document of the end of the eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century, contains the information that Samuel ha-Kohen b. Aaron, and his wife Karīma, gave Sitt al-Sāda, daughter of the aforementioned Samuel, one sixth of the house in *zuqāq* (lane of) *mikhīl* (=Michael), "a cul de sac from where one enters *bāb al-jammālīn* (the camels drivers' gate), an undivided common apartment house, as against two *qīrāṭs* (a twenty-fourth part) that were written in her *ketubbā* at the house which was in *zuqāq al-ḥudayjī*, that is in the partnership of our Lord and Master Nehorai, the *rav* par excellence, of blessed memory, that were taken by a certain person for the *jāmi'* (the main mosque)" etc. From this we learn that Nehorai had part of the house in the *al-ḥudayjī* lane and that the authorities confiscated it (after his death, apparently), granting it to the mosque. A draft of a court record from AM 4827 (1066/7) refers to this house: two people who were living in Nehorai's part of the house testified, that at Nehorai's request, they had informed Joseph b. 'Alī Kohen Fāsī, who also lived there, that Nehorai owned only one-sixth of the house, and if Joseph wanted to occupy another part of it he would have to pay one dinar per month.

In a letter of Nehorai's to 'Awād b. Hananel, he mentions goods of his in Fustat, "in the small house". According to a number of letters and the address written on them, one may conclude that Nehorai and his family lived with some of his cousins, the Tāhirtīs (in all events, Barhūn b. Isaac), in *dār al-birka*, in *sūq al-naḥḥāsīn* ("house of the pool", in the "copper goods market"); where the shop of al-Kohen—i.e. Joseph b. 'Alī Kohen Fāsī—was also located. The place was also known as *al-ma'ārīj* (the steps; also: *jisr* [=bridge] *al-ma'ārīj*), which we know was near the large flax market of Fustat, the *qālūš*.

Nehorai had a lengthy stay in Alexandria, apparently before he settled in Fustat, and also later paid frequent visits to that city. We also have information about a house he owned in Alexandria. Nathan b. Nehorai, of Alexandria, writes about it. From Nathan we learn that Nehorai had a house there that he leased when he was not in the city. Nathan would collect the rent for him, and his letter mentions the collection of three dinars and sixteen *qīrāṭs* (two thirds of a dinar). It appears that one of the tenants was Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, who asks Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī, in a letter sent from Alexandria, to receive the balance that Nehorai owed him after getting the rent. Another tenant was 'Awād b. Hananel, who asks Nehorai, also in a letter from Alexandria, to inform him where the spring was from where water was supposed to reach the *ṣihrīj* (the pool), because it was already two months that he has had to drink water (bought) from the water carriers. He returns to this in another letter: he had contacted a *ṣānī'*, an artisan, who would

°Ayyāsh b. Ṣedāqā. Barhūn asks °Ayyāsh to help Nehorai whenever necessary: 381, a, ll. 4ff. Barhūn b. Mūsā: 348, b, ll. 23ff. Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: 449, a, ll. 14-18. Maymūn b. Khalfā: 561, b, ll. 8ff.; Mevasser b. David: 694, a, ll. 10ff.; Abraham b. Farrāḥ to Isaac b. °Alī al-Majjānī: 556, a, ll. 10-11.

charge a dinar for the repair, but first wanted to ask Nehorai. In 1097, shortly before Nehorai's death, Moses b. Labrāṭ b. Moses Ibn Sughmār, writes to him from Alexandria, and, as it transpires, Nehorai already owned two houses in Alexandria; repairs were carried out on the houses and there were expenses, but from the rental, Nehorai had a positive balance of 13 dinars and three quarters, and was sending it "at the end of the year 90" (AH 490; AD 1097). Nehorai also owned a warehouse in Alexandria to store his goods. Clear evidence of a lengthy stay in Alexandria is in Nehorai's letter to his brother-in-law, Daniel ha-Kohen b. 'Allān; he intends to spend the winter in Alexandria (the letter was from 12 Av) with the family, i.e., his wife's family, who lived in Alexandria, and spend part of the time at Abū 'Imrān's, apparently Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy, and part of the time with Mardūkh (b. Mūsā), who lived in the same house, belonging, as stated above, to Nehorai.³⁹⁶

(397) Nehorai had a high status in Fustat Jewry, especially with the 'Babylonians'. This status derived to a great extent from the activity he engaged in, which had always been considered central in the life of the Jewish community, support for the weak and the needy. There is a letter of Shelah b. Mevasser, i.e., Shelah *he-ḥavēr*, a *dayyān* in Alexandria, to Nehorai. He

³⁹⁶ An apartment at Abū Sahl: 280, c, l. 2; the *qā'a* in *qaṣr al-sham'*: 333, b, l. 19; perhaps that was the apartment referred to by Nissim b. Ḥalfōn, when noting that Nehorai did not return to his *qā'a*: 588, a, l. 2. The house in the *al-ḥadījī* (or: *ḥudayjī*) lane: TS 16.72; see on *zuqāq* (or *darb*) *al-ḥadījī*: Gil, *Docs.*, 298 n. 10, with references, and see *ibid.* in the index under *darb*. The advice for Joseph b. 'Alī: 302. The name of one of the two tenants is preserved: 'Ammār b. Farrāḥ al-'Ibrābuluṣī; apparently Nehorai intended to judiciously avoid a conflict with the owners of the other parts of the compound, and obtain a document proving that Joseph b. 'Alī Kohen Fāṣī was aware of the situation. See the discussions in Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, IV, 19, 91, 353 n. 88. *Idem*, *Letters*, 290f.; his interpretations are slightly different from mine. The "small house": 263, b, l. 1. *Dār al-birka*, *sūq al-naḥḥāsin*: e.g. 395, 398; the shop of Joseph b. 'Alī Kohen Fāṣī: 504, cf. Goitein, *ibid.*, IV, 351 n. 63. Goitein read it, in 504, as *dār al-baraka*, relying on Ibn Duqmāq, IV, 6; but the proximity to *al-ma'ārīj* proves that one should read *al-birka*, the pool, which is the *birkat al-ḥabash*, the pool of the Ethiopians. See Maqrīzī, *Khitaṭ*, II, 43, 140, 141, where the proximity between *sūq al-ma'ārīj* and this pool becomes obvious. See also Abū Ṣāliḥ, 16f., in the editor's notes, on the "pool of the Ethiopians", and *ibid.*, 131, the proximity between *sūq al-ma'ārīj* and *birkat al-ḥabash*. Cf. Lane-Poole, *Hist.*, 140f. *Dār al-birka* in *al-ma'ārīj*, see: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 261 (no. 504, in the address), and see there the index, under *jisr al-ma'ārīj*, *al-ma'ārīj*; and see *idem*, *Hist.*, 262. *Dār al-ṣarf*, the house of the money changers, was probably in the same neighborhood, and the shop of Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī was located there, see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 267 (no. 506), in the address; 271 (no. 507); the shop of Abraham b. Isaac ha-Talmīd was also located there, see *ibid.*, 274 (no. 508, b, l. 7); 500 (no. 393, in the address). See *al-ma'ārīj* also in the address of 776; see also Khan, *Docs.*, 84, on this topic. The house in Alexandria: 416, a, ll. 22ff. Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: 460, b, margin. 'Awād: 566, b, ll. 22-23; 568, b, ll. 7-11; cf. Goitein, *Med. Soc.*, IV, 68f. Ibn Sughmār: 624, a, margin and the continuation there. See also the letter of Ephraim b. Isaac, who wrote to Nehorai from Alexandria and presented a kind of report on his dealings concerning the apartment which was apparently owned by Nehorai. He had it whitewashed and had new locks installed: 710, a, ll. 15-17. Another letter from Alexandria which also deals with the apartment: 'Awād b. Ḥananel came to the writer, Hīlāl b. Ḥasan, asking for the key, in order to remove a cargo of medicinal herbs and load it onto a ship which was about to set sail, and the writer complains about Nehorai's having addressed 'Awād in this matter instead of himself: 715, a, ll. 14ff.; the store in Alexandria: 568, b, l. 6. The letter to Daniel ha-Kohen b. 'Allān: 265. Nehorai stays in Alexandria: see also 737, in the address; he received the letter at the address of the Alexandrian merchant Abraham b. Farrāḥ.

expresses esteem for his activity on behalf of the orphans, i.e., "the children of Abū'l-Khayr, brother-in-law of b. al-Shīnīzī"; at issue were goods left by the deceased, which Nehorai made sure would reach the widow, the mother of the orphans; Nehorai also made sure that monies owed the deceased were paid to the widow. "You will receive a great reward from Heaven for this", Shelah writes. As was customary in the community, a person of the type of Nehorai, someone with a solid economic status and trusted by the people, was sometimes asked to serve as guardian for orphans; since Nehorai was a Maghribi in origin, and lived in Egypt, this concerned mainly the collection of debts on behalf of the orphans who had remained in the Maghrib, whose fathers had property, or money coming to them, in Egypt. Thus the letter of °Alī b. Joseph, of Safāqūṣ, to Barhūn b. Šālīḥ: Nehorai was appointed guardian (*wakīl*) of the orphan Isaac b. Abraham, who was in Safāqūṣ. Even someone apparently a stranger to Nehorai, Mašliah b. Judah, of Alexandria, turned to him, asking that he deal with a debt of two dinars less a *qīrāt*, owed to him by Abū Sahl Manasseh b. David, the money changer, of Fustat. He tried to collect the debt by endorsing it to a certain Abū Rawḥ Faraj al-Arjawānī (who apparently owed money to Manasseh b. David), but without success; he concludes: "do this good deed for me and I will be among those who are grateful to you, do me a favor, and your grace will affect me, as you have done for the others". Similarly, we find a fragment of a letter from a certain Manasseh, dealing with the inheritance of °Uqbān b. Salmān; the deceased had a sister (apparently a maternal sister), the daughter of Surūr b. Tammām; this sister's daughter was in Mahdiyya, and she should be taken into consideration before the entire bequest (after subtracting the widow's bridal money) is turned over to an heir on the deceased's father's side, his cousin. Another matter of dealing with an inheritance: Nehorai b. Nissim's cousin, Nehorai b. Nathan, sent him (from the Maghrib) the minutes regarding the bequest of Sittāt daughter of °Abdallah, which included landed property; later it was discovered that some of the land did not belong to the deceased woman at all, but to °Aṭīyya b. Ḥā'ik. This was one of the issues that Nehorai had to deal with. People also turned to Nehorai in matters of intercession and obtaining things from the authorities. He was active in getting a caliphate order (*sijill*) for someone whose name has not been preserved. The money changer Ibn Sha'ṣā was the one who would turn directly to the authorities, and Nehorai placed great pressure on him; the head of the *dīwān* (a government office, which one is not clear) intervened on his behalf and pressured the *qāḍī* (apparently, the *qāḍī* al-Yāzūrī, the vizier of the Fatimid state) to issue the *sijill*, otherwise he would not write the letters for him. Nehorai is the addressee approached also in matters of the ransom of captives. Yeshū'ā ha-Kohen *he-ḥāvēr* b. Joseph, the *dayyān* of Alexandria, asks (through Nehorai) for 40 dinars to make up the necessary ransom to free three captives bought by merchants from Malaf (i.e., Amalfi) from their captors, Byzantine military men. It is interesting that the Malaf merchants (themselves, from the area under control of the *rūm*) held captives and came to collect their cost while holding the captives, in an area under Muslim rule. Above (sec. 393), we have seen that Nehorai dealt with matters of captives in his letter to his brother-in-law, Daniel ha-Kohen b. °Allān.

While already an old man, Nehorai was deeply involved in the stormy controversy between David b. Daniel and Abiathar ha-Kohen b. Elijah: he was a strong supporter of David, along with two of the most prominent Maghribi figures in Egypt: 'the *rav*', i.e., Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph, and Abraham b. Isaac *al-talmīd*. Here there was a strong desire to make the entire Jewish Diaspora subordinate to the rule of the exilarchic dynasty, reflecting a generations-long tradition of loyalty to this dynasty, among this group of merchants, descendants of the Rādhānites, Babylonians and Persians in origin. This movement was a resounding failure, apparently not a little because of the defects in the character of the young man at the center of the issue, David b. Daniel. Nehorai and his entire party revoked their position, as we read in the letter of Mūsā b. Abī'l-Hayy, Nehorai's relative and business partner, to the gaon, Abiathar ha-Kohen: "...I have seen that our Master Nehorai, the great *rav* appointed by the yeshiva, was happy and joyous over the renewal in this issue (i.e., the renewal of the status of the Palestinian yeshiva, then located in Tyre) and that it was flourishing, wonder of wonders. He prays and gives great thanks (to God) for your highness, as does his son, our Master Nissim, may our Merciful preserve him". One of Nehorai's associates and his partner in the struggle against Abiathar ha-Kohen, the Palestinian gaon, was Abraham b. Nathan, the son of the late chief judge of the Palestinian yeshiva, and the rival of Solomon b. Judah over the gaonate. Nehorai was the person Abraham b. Nathan wrote to from Tyre, in 1094, after the collapse of David's party, lamenting his bad fortune. This connection had continued for many years, from the time Abraham b. Nathan was still a young man, perhaps not even 20-years-old. On 4 August 1057, Labrāṭ b. Moses Ibn Sughmār writes to Nehorai b. Nissim, among other things: "you wrote, my Lord, that you were happy that the son of the *rōsh*, our Master Nathan of blessed memory, was poring over his studies and making efforts in learning Scripture, may God complete what he has begun and help him and guard the life of my Lord the *rav* (i.e., Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph), may God maintain his greatness and do good for him, for through him God renewed the Torah and gave light to the community and strengthened the religion"; then there are expressions of admiration regarding the *rav*, whereby we learn that Abraham b. Nathan was then one of his students, something which undoubtedly brought him into the circle of Maghribis around Nehorai—which was expressed more than 20 years later, by the support of Abraham b. Nathan for the exilarchic dynasty, the center of this party's ideological world. When Abraham b. Nathan was in Palestine he also used to receive letters from Nehorai; as Āvōn b. Šedāqā writes from Jerusalem, in November 1064, to Nehorai: "letters from you, my Lord, to R. Abraham son of the *rōsh* Abū Sahl (i.e., of Nathan b. Abraham), have arrived, and I obtained them from the letter carrier and sent them to him, to Ramla".

Nehorai was always close to the 'Babylonian' synagogue in Fustat and loyal to that congregation; we do not find any mention of ties that he had personally with the Palestinian yeshiva, even though he made pilgrimages to Jerusalem, certainly more than once. Nevertheless, there is a fragment in the Geniza showing that Nehorai had special connections with Jerusalem, which is a fragment of a letter by Abū Sa'd al-Maghribī to Nehorai, from which very little can be garnered. Money matters are discussed in the letter,

because twice there was mention of the money-changer Abū Naṣr Solomon (Salāma) b. Saadia; there was also mention of an announcement of a ban on somebody; the writer claims it caused him damage. Mentioned is *al-guds al-ma'mūr*, Jerusalem, may it be rebuilt. We know of one Abū Sa'd, a contemporary, the Karaite Isaac b. Aaron, who was governor of Jerusalem, around 1060; the letter was brought by 'Alā b. Ḥasan b. 'Ammār b. Muḥammad. Ḥasan b. 'Ammār, i.e., the name of the letter carrier's father, was the name of the Kitāmī army commander at the time of the Fatimid caliph, al-Ḥākim, and he may have been identical with the person who was one of the Fatimid commanders in Sicily (above, sec. 310).³⁹⁷

(398) In the 60s—we have no way of pointing to a more precise date—the letters written to Nehorai b. Nissim begin with the formula *gedōl ha-yeshivā*, a title that was bestowed upon him, “the great one of the yeshiva”, adding also *he-ḥāvēr*, the *rav*, as for example in the letter from Alexandria, sent to him by Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl al-Makhmūri: *he-ḥāvēr al-rav* “the great one of the yeshiva”; he is also referred to as such by 'Awād b. Ḥananel, Benaiah b. Mūsā, 'Amram b. Joseph, and others; while further along, in later years, he is called “the great *bēt dīn*”. It may be assumed that those who had granted these titles were first, Daniel b. 'Azariah, who was “*nāsī* and *gaon*” in Jerusalem, and later, his son, David, of whom, as stated above, Nehorai was one of the main supporters.

There were those who turned to Nehorai to rule on halachic matters; such as the people of Maltj, who asked him for a ruling in the matter of a widow suspected of being a divorcee. Nehorai was heavily involved in the transmission of responsa on halachic matters, *jawābāt*; thus, for example, Mevasser b. David, of Tinnīs, was expecting to receive responsa texts through Nehorai. Nehorai, himself, asks to acquire books of *halākhā*, and he especially asked for the *sefer ha-mafteaḥ* of Nissim b. Jacob; also mentioned is the book *al-mighlāq* (the lock), probably identical with *ha-mafteaḥ*.

Nehorai was also personally acquainted with Nissim b. Jacob. Nissim b. Isaac al-Tāhirtī, writes to Nehorai, from Sūsa, noting that Nissim b. Jacob often spoke in praise of Nehorai; Labrāt b. Moses Ibn Sughmār received

³⁹⁷ The letter of Shelah b. Mevasser: 790; see on him Goitein, *Med Soc.*, III, 481 n. 171; Gil, *Hist.*, 262, n. 38; Cohen, *Self Govt.*, 242f. The orphan in Safāqūs: 713, a, l. 17. Maṣliah b. Judah: 762. The legacy of 'Uqbān: 760. The legacy of Sittāt: see Khan, *Docs.*, 272f. (no. 59); 'Abdallah may also be the name of a Jew (=Obadiah); *ḥā'ik* = a weaver. The *sijill*: 255 (if indeed the *qāḍī* al-Yazūrī is meant, the time had to be before 1058, when al-Yazūrī was executed). Ransom of captives: 672; to Daniel b. 'Allān: 265. See on the dispute between David b. Daniel and Abiathar ha-Kohen b. Elijah: Gil, *Hist.*, 750-774, and his additions in *Te'uda*, 7 (1990/91), 304, 342f. (nos. 536a, 536b); the letter of Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 365f. (no. 551). Fidelity towards the house of the exilarchs is visible also by the 'alāma, *yeshū'ā*, which is the 'alāma of Daniel b. 'Azariah and his son David, at the end of Nehorai's letter 253. Abraham b. Nathan to Nehorai: Gil, *Palest.*, III, 382-384 (no. 557), and see *ibid.*, 616-618. Labrāt b. Moses: 616, a, ll. 36ff.; perhaps Abraham b. Nathan is meant by *ibn al-rayis*, “son of the head”, from whom a bracelet was purchased. The bracelet was to be presented to a certain Ibn Ma'sūm, probably a bribe for some high official; the price was “four dinars and 2/3 and 1/8 and 1/2 *qirāṭ*”, see 291, a, l. 14. Nehorai's accounting: 'Avnōn b. Sedaqā: see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 241 (no. 500, b, ll. 31-32). Additional evidence of Nehorai's community activities is a small fragment of a sheet which contained an act of court, “in the presence of our Master Nehorai and Isaac al-Baghdādī”: ENA 2805, f. 8B. The letter of Abū Sa'd: 827; cf. on Isaac b. Aaron: Gil, *Hist.*, 406f.; Ḥasan b. 'Ammār: *ibid.*, 304.

Nehorai's letters and transmitted them to Nissim b. Jacob; among other matters it said there that Nissim b. Jacob was trying to obtain for Nehorai the copies that he requested from him. It appears that Nissim b. Jacob was then in Mahdiyya. Labrāṭ b. Moses, himself, writing to Nehorai from Mahdiyya, on 6 August 1054, notes that he had written to Nissim b. Jacob about Nehorai's eye ailment, and also passed on to him a letter from Nehorai; Labrāṭ employed a copier in Sūsa, and he was copying for Nehorai (apparently, under the supervision of Nissim b. Jacob) the proofread quires of Nissim b. Jacob. Sixteen quires had already been copied and proofread, but in the meanwhile Nissim had fallen ill. I have already dealt (above, sec. 235) with the issue of Nehorai's reservations regarding a responsum of Hayy Gaon.

Salmān b. Da'ūd (=Duwayda) al-Barqī turned to Nehorai, apparently from Tripoli of Libya, reminding him to write to his cousin (son of his mother's brother) Abū Ya'qūb (who is perhaps Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, though his *kunya* was Abū Sa'īd, but every Joseph could be called Abū Ya'qūb) and remind him that he is waiting for a responsum to an halachic question of his; we do not know to whom the query was addressed in this instance. 'Aṭā' b. Zikri, a Sicilian who was in Alexandria, asks Mevorakh b. Israel al-Janūnī to get an opinion of Nehorai's in an inheritance matter, raising the possibility of a consultation between Nehorai and the *rāṇ*, i.e., Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph. Part of the query has been preserved on the verso of the letter. Nehorai's fast ties with the *rav* become obvious during David b. Daniel's dispute that I have mentioned above; 'Ayyāsh b. Sedāqā writes to Nehorai from Fustat, when Nehorai was in Būṣīr, noting the *rav*'s great happiness upon receiving a letter from Nehorai.

A tempestuous affair in which Nehorai was involved was that of a *yibbūm* (levirate marriage) issue in Alexandria. The community there wanted the widow to be taken in a levirate marriage by the deceased's elder, married, brother, but she only agreed to marry one of the younger brothers; the elder brother refused to grant *ḥalīṣā* (release) which led to a halachic discussion. It appears that the main involvement was that of the Maghribis in Alexandria, while the *bēt dīn* there, headed by Yeshū'ā ha-Kohen b. Joseph, ruled that the widow was in the right. Five important Alexandrine 'elders', including Abraham b. Farrāh, sought to influence the widow and persuade her to marry the elder brother, but to no avail. Therefore, Yeshū'ā ha-Kohen, *dayyān* of Alexandria, asked Nehorai to obtain a ruling in this matter from the *rav*, Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph. Nehorai also acted as teacher, and had students. One of his students was Moses b. Labrāṭ b. Moses Ibn Sughmār, the writer of the letter to him regarding the houses in Alexandria. Another student of his, also from Ramla, had lived many years in Baghdad, and I have mentioned his letters a number of times; as a youth, he had stayed in Fustat, and participated in Nehorai's lessons.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁸ Yeshū'ā b. Isma'īl: 309; 'Awād: "*sayyidī wa-mawlā'ī* (my Lord and Master) the *ḥāver*, the great member of the yeshiva", and similar epithets: 568, 570, 571; Benaiah: 605, where he exalts Nehorai's significance for the Maghribis, whereas the Alexandrians are abusing them; 'Amram b. Joseph: 675, ("the great member of the yeshiva"; *sanhedrā rabbā*, "the great member of the Sanhedrin"). "The great court" (intending: the great member of the court), see Nathan b. Nehorai, in 492 and 493; Malij: see Gil, *Palest.*, III, 413f. (no. 560); cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, II, 326, 405, 598 n. 71. Mevasser b. David: 692, a, l. 12; buying books:

(399) Nehorai b. Nissim suffered from ill-health. The letters written to him by his partners and relatives often mention his illness. Mardūkh b. Mūsā, for example, expresses great concern after learning that Nehorai has fallen ill, in about 1045, i.e., not long after Nehorai settled in Egypt. At around 1055, he was ill again, and complains about it in his letter to ʿAwād b. Ḥananel; he had boils on his left thigh. At about the same time, Nissim b. Halfon wrote to Nehorai from Damsīs, expressing the hope that Nehorai had already recuperated from the illnesses about which he had written to him. In about 1075 we read wishes for recovery and good health in the letter by ʿAmram b. Joseph. Nathan b. Nehorai informs Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy about Nehorai's illness (about 1063); Benaiah b. Mūsā, writing to Nehorai from Alexandria, at about 1080, informs him of the concern of the people of the city upon learning of Nehorai's illness; however, we learn from there that Nehorai had already recovered, and was even attending the baths. More than anything, Nehorai (and all his well-wishers), was most upset by an eye ailment that developed into full blindness. Gradually, we find that Nehorai was no longer doing any writing, but that someone was doing it for him, as can easily be seen from the calligraphy; for example, a fragment of a letter, apparently written to Abū Saʿīd b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, about coin matters. Nissim b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī mentions worrying matters that he learned about in Sūsa, about Nehorai's eye disease, this in a letter to him, apparently at the beginning of the 50s. In September 1056, Ismaʿīl b. Farah writes from Alexandria to his son Farah, mentioning Nehorai's eye problems: Nehorai has written to Farah, among other things, "that his eye had been cracked and that he was about to lose his sight in one eye". Labrāṭ b. Moses Ibn Sughmār, in his letter of August 1057 to Nehorai from Mahdiyya, writes that he was shaken when he learned about his eye ailment; Nissim b. Jacob was also worried because of it. Joseph b. ʿAlī Kohen Fāsī, at about the same time, sends him blessings and good wishes for the health of his eyes, after they were in a bad state. Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī, also at about that time, writes from Mahdiyya, mentioning his eye disease. The Ramla man whom I have already mentioned a number of times, writing to Nehorai in the 90s, asks the person who will be reading the letter to Nehorai, not to skip a single word, so that there be no misunderstanding, thus making it clear that Nehorai was already blind (he may not even have been alive when the letter arrived).

In 1097, Moses b. Labrāṭ b. Moses Ibn Sughmār writes to Nehorai, confirming that he had received his letter, which made him very happy; he

710. He also asks for two copies of the *Sefer ha-maʿasiyōt* (*al-faraj baʿd al-shidda*) of Nissim b. Jacob: 716, a, margin; the relations with Nissim b. Jacob: 389, a, upper margin; Labrāṭ b. Moses: 616, a, ll. 7-18; Nissim b. Jacob is not mentioned by name, but it is quite obvious that he is meant. On Nehorai's eagerness to acquire books, evidence can be found in one of his accounts, in which his relationship with Ephraim b. al-Zaffān, a former physician at that time who possessed a huge library, is mentioned, see 291, b, ll. 16, 25, and cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, V, 4. Salmān b. Daʿūd: 769, a, ll. 7-8. ʿAṭā b. Zikri: 775, cf. Goitein, *Med Soc.*, II, 338. See also a letter from al-Maḥalla to Nehorai, dealing with matters of ritual slaughter in al-Maḥalla; also implied is that books, or quires which should be returned, are referred to; the writer asks, "teach us, our Master", referring to a talmudic topic: 829, and see the notes there. The matter of the *yibbūm* (Levirate marriage): 673. Moses b. Labrāṭ as a pupil of Nehorai: 624, a, ll. 18-19; the Ramla man: 85, and see there especially: a, margin; b, margin, 86, a, ll. 25ff.

expresses anxiety about the illness that had afflicted him. "God, may He be exalted, will spare you for us of anything of danger and will not extinguish the lamp of Israel"; he mentions the pain of Nehorai's illnesses, that did not prevent him from paying attention to the issues of concern to the writer. This illness that the writer mentions, is what Nehorai died from, apparently in that year, 1097, or the beginning of 1098. We have a deed of Friday 6 Nisan, Sel. 1409, 11 March 1098, signed: "Nissim son of Master Nehorai the *rav* may the memory of the righteous be blessed".³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ Mardūkh b. Mūsā: 526, a, ll. 5-6, b, ll. 6-7; to °Awād b. Hananel: 263; Nissim b. Ḥalfōn: 591, a, l. 4; °Amram b. Joseph: 677, a, ll. 4-8; Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy: 435, a, l. 6; Benaiah b. Mūsā: 605, a, ll. 3ff. To Joseph b. Mūsā: 267; Nissim b. Isaac: 389, a, ll. 4ff.; Isma'īl b. Farah: 491, a, ll. 3ff.; Labrāt b. Moses: 616, a, ll. 4-10; Joseph b. °Alī: 400, b, ll. 11; Joseph b. Mūsā: 367, b, l. 20; the man from Ramla: 85, b, margin. Moses b. Labrāt: 624, a, ll. 5ff. The deed signed by Nissim b. Nehorai: ULC Add 3422(1); Nehorai's death is dated by Udovitch, *Individualism*, 66 n.10, to 1096 or 1097.

CHRONOLOGY

In general, only those dates that are considered to be certain are included. Numbers in bold type refer to the collection of 846 Geniza documents which I edited in vols. 2-4 of *Be-malkhūt īshmaʿēl bi-teqūfat ha-geʿōnīm* (Tel Aviv 1997).

504, June	Death of Samā b. Yehūdai, of the <i>sāvōrā ʿīm</i>
506, February 13	Death of Aḥai b. Hūnā, of the <i>sāvōrā ʿīm</i>
506, March	Death of Raḥūmī, of the <i>sāvōrā ʿīm</i>
506, November	Death of Samuel b. Judah, <i>dayyān</i> of Pumbedita
507, February	Earthquake; death of Aḥa b. Rāvā bar Abūh, of the <i>sāvōrā ʿīm</i>
520	Mar Zūṭrā, son of the exilarch, emigrates to Palestine
529	Liquidation of the Mazdakite revolution in Persia
589	Uprising of Bahrām Chūbīn in Persia; Hūrmazd IV, king of Persia, murdered
589	Hānān of Ashiqiyya is appointed head of the Pumbedita yeshiva
ca. 591	Mar b. Hūnā is appointed head of the Sura yeshiva; Mārī b. Dīmī, is appointed head of the Pumbedita yeshiva; Kafnai, father of the exilarch Bustanai, murdered.
ca. 605	Battle of Dhū Qārr; the Banū Bakr b. Wāʿil defeat the Persian army
ca. 610	Hananiah (Hīnenai) is appointed head of the Sura yeshiva.
611	Persian war against Byzantium; conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt
622, September	The <i>hijra</i> ; Muḥammad arrives in Qubāʾ, on the outskirts of Medina
628	Yishūʿyahav II appointed as catholicos
629, June 17 – 630, May	Reign of Būrān (Pūrān), queen of Persia
629, June – 630, June	Uprising of Shahrbarāz in Persia
629, September 14	End of the war between Persia and Byzantium; the holy cross is returned to Jerusalem
ca. 630	Hūnā is appointed head of the Pumbedita yeshiva
632	Yazdigird III ascends to the throne of Persia
632, June 8	Death of Muḥammad; Abū Bakr becomes caliph
633	Invasion of Babylonia by Banū Bakr b. Wāʿil
634	The battle of the bridge, Muthannā saves the Muslims from defeat
634, August 23	Death of Caliph Abū-Bakr, succeeded by ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb
636 (637?), February-March	Buṣbhurā withdraws, while the Muslims advance from the Euphrates eastward, to Madāʾin (=Māhōzē)
636	Battle of Qādisiyya; the Persian army defeated by the Muslims
637	Capture of the women of the Persian royal court (after the battle of Qādisiyya)

- 642 Battle of Nihāwand, final victory of the Muslims; conquest of Ispahān
- 644, November Caliph °Umar murdered; °Uthmān b. °Affān becomes caliph
- ca. 650 Hūnā is appointed gaon in Sura
- ca. 651 Rāvā is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 651/652 Yazdigird III, king of Persia, murdered in Khurāsān
- 656, June 17 Caliph °Uthmān murdered; °Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib becomes caliph
- 657, January Rav Isaac of Pumbedita welcomes Caliph °Alī in Kūfa
- 659 Battle of Šiffin
- ca. 660 Bustanai (Būsai) is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 661 Mu°āwiya is proclaimed caliph
- ca. 670 Sheshnā (Mesharshayā b. Ṭahlifā ?) is appointed gaon in Sura; his responsum about taxes
- 675 Dirhams with Hebrew inscription minted in Bašra, by order of °Ubaydallah b. Ziyād
- ca. 680 Hūnā is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 680, April Death of Caliph Mu°āwiya; succeeded by his son Yazīd
- 680, October 10 Ḥusayn b. °Alī is murdered in Karbalā
- 683, November Death of Caliph Yazīd; succeeded by Mu°āwiya II, his son
- 684, June Caliph Marwān b. al-Ḥakam starts reign
- 685, April Caliph °Abd al-Malik b. Marwān starts reign
- 689 Ḥananiah of Nahr Pāqōd is appointed gaon in Sura; Hūnā b. Joseph is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 690 Ḥumrān, a Jew, is appointed governor in Bašra
- 692/3 Muḥammad, brother of °Abd al-Malik, is appointed governor of Iraq
- 694 Death of Ḥananiah of Nahr Pāqōd, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Hillai ha-Levi of Narash
- ca. 700 Ḥiyyā of Mēshān is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 705, September 14 Death of Caliph °Abd al-Malik; succeeded by his son, al-Walīd
- ca. 710 Rabiya Mōrōnay (?) is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 712 Death of Hillai ha-Levi, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Jacob ha-Kohen of Nahr Pāqōd
- 713/14 A pseudo-messiah appears in Mardīn
- 715, February 24 Death of Caliph al-Walīd; succeeded by Sulaymān b. °Abd al-°Azīz
- 718 Serenus, a pseudo-messiah appears
- 719 Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah (b. Mar Yanqā), is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 720, February Death of Caliph °Umar b. °Abd al-°Azīz; succeeded by Yazīd b. °Abd al-Malik
- 721-726 °Anbasa b. Suhaym is governor of Spain
- 724, January Death of Caliph Yazīd b. °Abd al-Malik; succeeded by his brother Ḥīshām
- 729 A serious conflict between the gaon of Pumbedita, Naṭrūnai b. Nehemiah, and his opponents
- 729 Jews in Neo-Caesarea (in Cappadocia) hand over the city to the Muslims

- 730 Death of Jacob ha-Kohen, gaon of Sura; exilarch Solomon b. Hisdai appoints his successor, Samuel, the grandson of Rabba
- ca. 730 Judah is appointed gaon in Pumbedita
- 743 Simeon Qayyārā writes the book *halākhōt gedōlōt*
- 743, February Death of Caliph Hishām b. °Abd al-Malik, succeeded by al-Walīd b. °Abd al-Malik
- 744, April Caliph al-Walīd b. Yazīd murdered; succeeded by Yazīd b. °Abd al-Malik
- 744, October Caliph Yazīd murdered, succeeded by Ibrahīm b. al-Walīd b. °Abd al-Malik
- 744, November Defeat of Caliph Ibrahīm; succeeded by Marwān b. Muḥammad b. Marwān
- 748 Samuel b. Rav Mar becomes gaon in Pumbedita
- 750, January Defeat of the Umayyads, on the Great Zab
- 752/3 Inscription written in Judaea-Persian in the region of the Ghūr (Northern Afghanistan)
- 754, June 9 Death of Caliph Abū'l-°Abbās al-Saffāḥ; succeeded by his brother, Abū Ja°far al-Manṣūr
- ca. 755 Aḥa of Shabbā emigrates to Palestine
- ca. 755 Naṭrūnai ha-Kohen b. Emūnā becomes gaon in Pumbedita
- 756 Death of Marī ha-Kohen, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Aḥa
- 757 Death of Aḥa, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Yehūdai b. Naḥmān
- 758/9 Questions raised during a convention, probably in the Sura yeshiva (*she'īlātā de-fīrqā*)
- ca. 760 Secession of °Anan b. David
- ca. 761 Abraham ha-Kohen is gaon in Pumbedita for a short period; succeeded by Davidai b. Naḥmān
- 761 Death of Yehūdai b. Naḥmān, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Aḥūnai ha-Kohen b. Papa
- 762, July 30 Baghdad founded by the Abbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr
- 767 A polemic in Baṣra between Jews and Muslims on religious matters
- 767 Hananiah b. Mesharshayā becomes gaon of Pumbedita
- 769 Death of Aḥūnai ha-Kohen b. Papa, the gaon of Sura; succeeded by Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Aḥūnai (Hūnā)
- 769/70 Caliph al-Manṣūr appoints Mūsā b. Muṣ°ab as governor of Mosul
- ca. 770 Mention of Sumanai *rōsh-kallā*
- 771 Malkā b. Aḥa becomes gaon of Pumbedita
- ca. 772 Malkā b. Aḥa, gaon of Pumbedita, dismisses the exilarch Naṭrūnai b. Ḥanīnai (Ḥabībai)
- 772/3 Severe drought in the region of Mosul; Christians, Jews and Muslims pray for rain
- 773 Death of Malkā b. Aḥa, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Abbā (Rabba) b. Davidai
- 773 The son of the exilarch, a poet, takes part in colloquia in Baṣra
- 773 Destruction of prayer houses; persecution of *dhinmmīs*
- 774 Death of Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Aḥūnai, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Marī ha-Levi B. Mesharshayā

- 775, October Death of Caliph al-Manṣūr; succeeded by his son, al-Mahdī
- 778 Death of Marī ha-Levi b. Mesharshayā, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Bīboi ha-Levi b. Abba of Nahr Pāqōd
- ca. 782 Shīnui is gaon of Pumbedita for a short time
- 783/4 Taxes on shops imposed by Caliph al-Mahdī
- 784, July 1 Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab appointed governor of Egypt
- 785, April 24 Mūsā b. Muṣ'ab killed
- 785, August 4 Death of Caliph al-Mahdī
- 786 Restrictions concerning *dhinmmīs* begin
- 786 Dismissal of the Pumbedita gaon, Ḥanīnai ha-Kohen b. Abraham, by the exilarch
- 786, September 13 Death of Caliph al-Hādī; succeeded by his brother, Hārūn al-Rashīd
- 787 The heads of the two yeshivot and the exilarch decide that debts (including *ketubbōt*) can be collected from movable properties
- 788 Death of Hūnā ha-Levi b. Isaac, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Manasseh b. Joseph
- 789 Death of Bīboi ha-Levi b. Abba of Nahr Pāqōd, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Hillai b. Marī
- 796 Death of Manasseh b. Joseph, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Isaiah ha-Levi b. Abba
- 797 Charlemagne sends a delegation to Hārūn al-Rashīd
- 798 Death of Isaiah ha-Levi b. Abba, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Joseph b. Shīlā of Shilhī
- 798 Death of Hillai b. Marī, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Jacob ha-Kohen b. Mordecai and then by Ikhōmai b. Mordecai
- 801 Hārūn al-Rashīd sends a delegation to Charlemagne
- 803 Liquidation of the Barmakis family, of the Persian elite
- 804 Death of Joseph b. Shīlā, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Ravrevai ha-Kohen b. Ḥanīnai
- 807 Exchange of delegations between Charlemagne and Hārūn al-Rashīd
- 809, March Death of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd; succeeded by his son al-Amīn; internecine war begins between him and al-Ma'mūn
- ca. 810 End of the period of Ikhōmai ha-Kohen b. Mordecai and his brother Jacob, geonim of Sura; succeeded by Isaac Ṣādōq b. Jesse
- 810 Death of Ravrevai ha-Kohen b. Ḥanīnai, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Ikhōmai ha-Kohen b. Abraham
- ca. 812 Death of Isaac Ṣādōq b. Jesse, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Hillai b. Ḥananiah
- 813, September Al-Amīn murdered; al-Ma'mūn rules the caliphate
- 814 Ibn Zubāla writes his book on the history of al-Madīna
- 814 Death of Ikhōmai ha-Kohen b. Abraham, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Joseph b. Abba
- ca. 815 Queries from Qayrawān to Hillai b. Ḥananiah, gaon of Sura
- 815 Destruction of synagogues in northern Iraq

816	Death of Joseph b. Abba, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Abraham b. Sherira
ca. 816	Death of Hillai b. Ḥananiah, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Qīmoi b. Jesse
816	Earthquake in Iraq
816/7	Uprising in Baghdad against payments of <i>khafāra</i>
818	Dionysius of Tel Maḥrē appointed patriarch of the Ya ^c qūbites
818, October	Synod of the Ya ^c qūbite leadership
ca. 820	Death of Qīmoi b. Jesse, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob
824/5	Death of Abū ^u Ubayda Ma ^c mar b. al-Muthannā
ca. 825	Queries from Qayrawān to the gaon of Sura, Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob
ca. 825	Dispute between Abraham b. Sherira and Joseph b. Ḥiyyā over the gaonate of Pumbedita
ca. 825	Dispute between David b. Judah and Daniel b. Saul b. ^c Anan over the exilarchate; brought before Caliph al-Ma ^c mūn
827	Al-Ma ^c mūn proclaims the <i>miḥna</i> over theological matters
827, June 14	First incursion of the Muslims into Sicily
828	Death of Abraham b. Sherira, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Joseph b. Ḥiyyā
ca. 830	Death of Moses ha-Kohen b. Jacob, gaon of Sura
831, August	Conquest of Palermo by the Muslims
ca. 832	Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai appointed gaon of Sura
833	Death of Joseph b. Ḥiyyā, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Isaac b. Hūnā (Ḥananiah, Hūnai); dispute over the gaonate between Isaac b. Hūnā and Joseph b. Abbā (Ravrevai)
833, January	Death of Bishr b. Ghayyāth al-Marīsī, a dissident of Jewish extraction
833	Death of Caliph al-Ma ^c mūn; succeeded by his brother, al-Mu ^c tašim
834/5	Letter of the exilarch Daniel b. Saul b. ^c Anan, on the calendrical details of Sel. 1147 (835/36)
839	Death of Isaac b. Hūnā, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Joseph b. Abba (Ravrevai)
839/40	Earthquake causes heavy damage in al-Ahwāz; fire in the Karkh
841	Death of Joseph b. Abba (Ravrevai), gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Palṭoi b. Abbayē
842, January 14	Death of Caliph al-Mu ^c tašim; succeeded by his son, al-Wāthiq
ca. 843	Death of Kohen Šedeq b. Ikhōmai, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Sar Shālōm b. Boaz
845	Writing of <i>pesiqātā rabbāī</i>
845, August 22	Death of Dionysius of Tel Maḥrē
847	Death of Caliph al-Wāthiq; succeeded by his brother, al-Mutawakkil
849, July 26	Restrictive orders of Caliph al-Mutawakkil against the <i>dhimmīs</i>
850-854	More restrictive orders; destruction of prayer houses of the <i>dhimmīs</i> ; confiscation of one tenth of their houses;

- transformation of churches and synagogues into mosques
- ca. 850 Letter of Hayy b. David: many in the yeshiva of Sura are still supporters of the house of °Anan (4)
- ca. 853 Death of Sar Shālōm b. Boaz, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Naṭrūnai b. Hillai
- 854/5 *Dhimmi*s are forbidden to teach their children Arabic
- 855/6 Agreement between Baghdad and Byzantium on release of prisoners
- 858 Death of Palṭoi b. Abbayē, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Aḥa ha-Kohen b. Mar, for six months; succeeded by Menahem b. Joseph b. Hiyyā; dispute between him and Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevai
- 858, February 18 Responsum of °Amram b. Sheshnā
- 859/60 Earthquakes in Iraq
- ca. 860 The time of Mišhoi al-°Ukbarī, leader of a sect
- 860 Death of Menahem b. Joseph, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevai
- 860/61 Mention of Sahl b. David, *jahbadh* of the Fayyūm district
- ca. 861 Death of Naṭrūnai b. Hillai, gaon of Sura; succeeded by °Amram b. Sheshnā
- 861 Death of Abū °Abdallah Sa'īd b. al-Ḥasan al-Rūzbihān, Muslim scholar of Jewish extraction
- 861, December Caliph al-Mutawakkil murdered; succeeded by his son, al-Muntaṣir
- 862 Death of Caliph al-Muntaṣir; succeeded by his cousin, al-Musta'in b. Muḥammad b. al-Mu'taṣim
- 863, April 7 Queries to Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevai, gaon of Pumbedita; mention of Šemaḥ, head judge
- 866, January 3 Caliph al-Musta'in is removed
- 866, January 25 Al-Mu'tazz b. al-Mutawakkil is appointed as caliph
- 867 Death of Yūsuf b. Mūsā b. Rāshid al-Qaṭṭān, Muslim scholar of Jewish extraction
- 869 Death of Mattathias ha-Kohen b. Ravrevai, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Abba (Rāvā) b. Amī
- 869, June Caliph al-Mu'tazz murdered; succeeded by al-Muhtadī b. al-Wāthiq
- 870 Responsa of °Amram Gaon
- 870, June Caliph al-Muhtadī murdered; succeeded by al-Mu'tamid b. al-Mutawakkil
- 870, June °Ubaydallah b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān is appointed as vizier
- 871, September 7 Zanjīs launch attack in southern Iraq; destruction and massacres in Baṣra and Ubulla
- ca. 872 Death of °Amram b. Sheshnā, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Naḥshōn b. Isaac Šādōq
- 872 Death of Abba (Rāvā) b. Amī, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Isaac Šemaḥ b. Palṭoi
- 875 Beginning of the Sāmānī dynasty in Khurāsān
- 877, August Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad is appointed as vizier
- 878, March Death of Ibrāhīm b. Mālik b. Yahūdḥā b. Ishāq al-Bazzār, Muslim scholar of Jewish extraction
- 878, July Al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad is re-appointed as vizier
- 878 August Sulaymān b. Wahb is re-appointed as vizier

- 878/79 Ismaʿīl b. Bulbul is appointed as vizier; after him, for a third period, al-Ḥasan b. Makhlad is re-appointed; Ismaʿīl b. Bulbul is re-appointed and executed in the same year
- ca. 879 Death of Naḥshōn b. Isaac Ṣādōq, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Ṣemaḥ b. Ḥayyim
- 879, February Ṣāʿid b. Makhlad is appointed as vizier
- 879, May 10 Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad conquers Syracuse; the city is destroyed by the Muslims
- 879/80 Severe plague in Khurāsān
- 880-890 Voyage of Hārūn b. Yaḥyā
- 889 Birth of Saadia Gaon
- ca. 886 Death of Ṣemaḥ b. Ḥayyim, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Malkā, who dies after one month, succeeded by Ḥayy b. Naḥshōn (according to Nathan the Babylonian: Ḥayy b. Qāyōmā)
- 889 Death of Isaac Ṣemaḥ b. Paltoi, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Ḥayy b. David
- 889/90 Restrictive orders of Caliph al-Muʿtamid; ban on employing *dhimmīs* in official posts; also, discriminatory signs, etc.
- 890 The yeshiva of Pumbedita is now in Baghdad
- 891, June ʿUbaydallah b. Sulaymān is appointed as vizier
- 892, October Death of Caliph al-Muʿtamid; succeeded by his nephew, al-Muʿtaḍid b. al-Muwaffaq
- ca. 896 Death of Ḥayy b. David, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Qīmoi ha-Kohen b. Aḥi
- ca. 896 Death of Ḥayy b. Naḥshōn (or: b. Qāyōmā) b. Isaac Ṣādōq, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Hillai b. Naṭrūnai b. Hillai
- 901, April Al-Qāsim b. ʿUbaydallah is appointed as vizier
- 902, April 5 Death of Caliph al-Muʿtamid; succeeded by his son, al-Muktafi
- 902-903 Saadia writes his *Egbron* at the age of 20
- 904 Plague in Sura
- ca. 904 Death of Hillai b. Naṭrūnai, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Shalom b. Miṣhāʿel
- 904, October Al-ʿAbbās b. al-Ḥasan is appointed as vizier
- 905 Saadia writes his “answer to ‘Anan”
- 905, October Death of Qīmoi ha-Kohen b. Aḥi, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Judah b. Samuel
- ca. 906 Birth of Sherira b. Ḥananiah
- 906 Bertha, daughter of Lothar, “Queen of *Ifranja*” sends a gift to Caliph al-Muktafi
- ca. 907 Beginning of the dispute between the exilarch ʿUqbā and Judah b. Samuel, gaon of Pumbedita
- ca. 907 Death of Shalom b. Miṣhāʿel, gaon of Sura; succeeded by ʿAmram b. Solomon
- 908, August Death of Caliph al-Muktafi; succeeded by al-Muqtadir, his brother
- 908, December 17-18 Uprising against Caliph al-Muqtadir in support of the son of al-Muʿtazz
- 908, December 19 Ibn al-Furāt is appointed as vizier

908/9	Caliph al-Muqtadir bans the employment of Jews and Christians in public posts, except in medicine and money-changing
910, August 20	Beginning of Fatimid rule in Sicily
ca. 911	°Uqbā, ci-devant Exilarch, settles in Qayrawān
ca. 911	Death of °Amram b. Solomon, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Jacob ha-Kohen b. Naṭrūnai, followed by Yōm Tōv Kahanā b. Jacob b. Naṭrūnai
911	Crucifixion of Ibn al-Rāwandī, a philosopher of Jewish extraction
ca. 912	Meir Gaon b. Aaron b. Moses is appointed head of the Palestinian yeshiva, aided by his son Aaron, who succeeds him after his death
912, July	Arrest of °Alī-Ibn al-Furāt; Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā is appointed as vizier
912, October 16	°Abd al-Raḥmān III (al-Nāṣir) becomes ruler of Andalus
912/3	Plague in Baghdad
913	Death of Hārūn b. al-Ḥā'ik, a leading grammarian of Arabic, who was of Jewish extraction
913, August 1	°Alī Ibn °Isā is appointed as vizier
ca. 915	David b. Zakkai is appointed exilarch
916	Death of Neṭīrā, Baghdadian financier
917, February	Death of Judah b. Samuel, gaon of Pumbedita; Mevasser ha-Kohen b. Qīmoi appointed by the elders of the yeshiva as successor; the exilarch appoints Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph instead; dispute in Pumbedita
917, June 3	°Alī Ibn Furāt appointed as vizier for a second time
918, November 11	Hāmid Ibn al-°Abbās is appointed as vizier
918/9	Inquiry conducted into the matter of the Khaybari Jews' document
920, July or August	Fire in the Karkh
921	The mystic al-Ḥallāj is executed
921, summer	Beginning of the dispute between Palestine and Babylonia over the calendar
921, summer	Saadia is in Ḥalab, on his way to Baghdad
921, September 27	The order of the calendar is proclaimed in Palestine; the dispute with Babylonia intensifies
921, November 3-4	The Jews of Fustat, including 'Babylonians', watch the appearance of the New Moon
921, December	First letter of Saadia to Fustat, to the three sons of °Alī b. Ṭabnai (5)
922, February or March	Second letter of Saadia to Fustat (6)
922, July 18	Letter of Saadia to a person from the Palestinian yeshiva
922, September	Peace is restored between David b. Zakkai and the gaon of Pumbedita, Mevasser b. Qīmoi
922, towards end of the year	Death of Mevasser b. Qīmoi, gaon of Pumbedita; Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph remains as gaon of Pumbedita
923, January 3	Third letter of Saadia to the three sons of °Alī b. Ṭabnai, Fustat(?)
923, August 7	°Alī Ibn Furāt appointed as vizier for the third time

- 924, June 15 °Alī Ibn Furāt and his son al-Muḥassin are executed;
°Abdallah b. Muḥammad b. Khāqān is appointed as vizier
- 925 Death of Yōm Ṭōv Kahanā b. Jacob b. Naṭrūnai, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Hayy b. Qāyōmā
- 925, July 4 The family of Sabbetai Donnolo is captured as the Fatimid army attacks southern Italy
- 925, November 30 Aḥmad b. °Ubaydallah is appointed as vizier
ca. 927 Death of Hayy b. Qāyōmā, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Nathan b. Judah, who dies soon thereafter
- 927, January 18 °Ubaydallah al-Kalwādhānī is appointed as vizier
- 927, April 13 °Alī Ibn °Isā is appointed as vizier for the second time
- 927/8 Uprising in the Abbasid army
- 928 A special office is founded in Baghdad to deal with *jahbadh* matters
- 928, May 8 Ibn Muqla is appointed as vizier
- 928, May 15 Saadia b. Joseph is appointed as gaon of Sura
- 928, October 26 Uprising of Muslims in Qaṣr Ibn Hubayra; upheavals in Baghdad
- ca. 930 Beginning of the conflict between the exilarch David b. Zakkai and Saadia Gaon
- 930, June 17 Sulaymān b. al-Ḥasan is appointed as vizier
- 931 °Alī b. Aaron (Khalaf) is appointed as collector of taxes in Shīrāz
- 931 Upheavals in Baghdad; plague
- 931, August 16 °Ubaydallah al-Kalwādhānī is appointed as vizier for the second time
- 931, October 15 Al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim is appointed as vizier
- 932, May 9 Al-Faḍl b. Ja°far Ibn Furāt is appointed as vizier
- 932, October 31 Caliph al-Muqtadir murdered; succeeded by his brother, al-Qāhir
- 933 Oppression of Jews in Tustar and Ahwāz
- 934 Ibn Muqla appoints °Alī b. Aaron (Khalaf) as collector of taxes in Fāris and Kirmān
- 934, April 24 Caliph al-Qāhir is removed; succeeded by al-Rāḍī b. al-Muqtadir
- 934, June 7 °Alī b. Būye is appointed governor in the south of Persia
- 934, October-November °Alī b. Aaron (Khalaf) escapes to Baṣra
- 935 °Alī b. Aaron (Khalaf) is arrested by Ibn Muqla
- 935, beginning of summer Death of Kohen Šedeq b. Joseph, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Šemaḥ b. Kafnai
- 936-941 Rebellion in Sicily against Fatimid rule
- 937 End of the conflict between the exilarch David b. Zakkai and Saadia Gaon
- 937, September Death of Šemaḥ b. Kafnai, gaon of Pumbedita
- 937, December Ḥananiah b. Judah appointed as gaon of Pumbedita
- 938 Sahl b. Naẓīr (Neṭīrā), the Baghdadian financier, is murdered
- 938, March °Alī b. Aaron (Khalaf) is appointed as collector of taxes in Wāsiṭ
- 938 Assistant to °Alī b. Aaron (Khalaf) caught with a Muslim woman
- 939 Birth of Hayy b. Sherira

939, beginning of year	Ibn Rā'iq's men attack the homes of ʿAlī and Abraham, sons of Aaron (Khalaf)
939, February	Monetary claims made against ʿAlī b. Aaron (Khalaf) in Baghdad
940	Death of the exilarch David b. Zakkai; succeeded by his son, Judah
940, October 26	ʿAlī b. Aaron (Khalaf) arrested
940, December 8	Death of Caliph al-Rāḍī
940, December 13	Al-Muttaqī appointed as caliph. Severe drought in Iraq
941, May	Turkish commander evicts ʿAlī b. Aaron (Khalaf) from his home
941, autumn	Collapse of security in Baghdad
942	ʿAlī b. Aaron (Khalaf) participates in the action of the Ikshīd against Ibn Rā'iq
942, May 17	Death of Saadia Gaon; Joseph b. Jacob b. Saṭyā maintains his seat as gaon of Sura
943, summer	Death of Ḥananiah b. Judah, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (=Khalaf b. Sarjāda)
944-946	Famine and collapse of security in Iraq cause massive emigration
944, October 13	Caliph al-Muttaqī removed; succeeded by al-Mustakfī
a short time before 945	Nathan ha-Kohen b. Isaac the Babylonian describes the Babylonian yeshivot, the exilarchs and other Babylonian personalities
end of 945	The Daylamīs (Būyids) seize Baghdad
946, January 15	Caliph al-Mustakfī is murdered
946, January 19	Al-Muṭṭī is proclaimed caliph
946, summer	ʿAlī b. Aaron (Khalaf) is released from jail
947/8	The Fatimid caliph al-Manṣūr appoints Abū'l-Ghanā'im al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī b. Abī'l-Ḥasan al-Kalbī as governor of Sicily; beginning of the Kalbids' rule in Sicily
ca. 950	Beginning of the conflict between Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (Khalaf Ibn Sarjāda) and Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq
beginning of 953	Letters of She'ērīt and Dōsā, sons of Saadia Gaon (9)
953, March of April	Naḥshōn (?), grandson of Ṭōv, writes from Pumbedita (13)
956/7	Qaṣr Shīrīn destroyed by lightning
960	Severe depression in Iraq causes massive emigration
960	Queries from the Rhine communities to the Palestinian center
960, August	Death of Aaron ha-Kohen b. Joseph (Khalaf Ibn Sarjāda), gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq
961, October 15	Death of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, Caliph of Spain; succeeded by al-Ḥakam II
962, March	Death of Hophni b. Kohen Šedeq, <i>av-bēt-dīn</i> of Pumbedita
962, May 23	A deed of partnership is drawn up in Fustat (105)
962, November	Nehemiah Gaon's letters to communities (15, 16)
968	Death of Nehemiah b. Kohen Šedeq, gaon of Pumbedita; succeeded by Sherira b. Ḥananiah
968/9	Severe famine in Iraq resulting in mass emigration

- 971, September
972, October
973
973, April 22
973, May
974, August 5
977, June 21
978
979, March 26
980
983, spring
984, May 27
985
985, August-September
986/7
987
989, July 18
ca. 990
991, January or February
991, October 1
991/2
992
993
994
994
995
996, March 26
996, October
996, November-December
997
997, August
997, October
ca. 998
- Fragment of a letter from Sherira Gaon (21)
Abū'l-Futūḥ Yūsuf Buluqqīn Ibn Zīrī appointed by the Fatimids as governor of the Maghrib
Sherira Gaon writes his commentary to *Bāwā batrā*
Ibn Ḥawqal is in Palermo
A murder committed by a Shiite engenders arson in the center of Baghdad, causing enormous destruction
Death of Caliph al-Muṭṭi^c; succeeded by al-Ṭā'i^c
Samuel b. Hophni still in Pumbedita; his letter to Fustat (47)
Record of testimony in Qayrawān; dispatch of merchandise that had belonged to the deceased (106)
Conquest of Fās by Yūsuf Buluqqīn
Mention of Wahb b. Ya'īsh al-Raqqī
Ṭābā b. Ṣalahūn (Ṭōv b. Maṣliāḥ) completes his treatise *kitāb al-manāẓir*, in Mosul
Death of Abū'l-Futūḥ Yūsuf Buluqqīn Ibn Zīrī, governor of the Maghrib; succeeded by al-Manṣūr Ibn Yūsuf
Uddat al-^cAzīz Bi'llāh
Hayy b. Sherira appointed *av-bēt-dīn* in the Pumbedita yeshiva
Responsum of Samuel b. Hophni
Severe famine causes massive emigration from Iraq
Sherira Gaon sends his *Letter* on the history of the halacha scholars, to Jacob b. Nissim in Qayrawān
Sherira Gaon and his son Hayy, the *av-bēt-dīn*, write to Samuel ha-Kohen b. Joseph, gaon of Palestine (27)
Restoration of Sura's position; Ṣemeḥ Ṣedeq is appointed gaon of Sura
Sherira and Hayy send a quire of responsa to She-mariah b. Elhanan
Caliph al-Ṭā'i^c removed; succeeded by al-Qādir
Conflict about land inheritance in Fustat
Responsum of Sherira Gaon to Qayrawān about the use of Aramaic
Severe drought in Iraq
Riots of ^cAyyārūn in Baghdad
Sherira Gaon writes to the communities of Yemen (28)
Rulers of Iraq confiscate many private deposits of money
Death of Manṣūr b. Yūsuf, ruler of Ifrīqiyyā; succeeded by his son, Bādīs
Death of Caliph al-^cAzīz the Fatimid; succeeded by his son, al-Ḥākim
Responsum of Sherira Gaon to Judah b. Joseph, Qayrawān
The Ya^cqūbite Ibn Zur'a composes a treatise of discussion with Bishr b. Pinḥās, the Jew
Mention of *kallā de-elūl*, which took place in the yeshiva (probably of Pumbedita) in a quire of responsa
Deed of Court: deathbed will of Sherira Gaon's time (29)
Death of Ṣemaḥ Ṣedeq b. Isaac, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Samuel Ha-Kohen b. Hophni

- 998 Jaʿfar b. Yūsuf becomes governor of Sicily; victory of al-Muʿizz, ruler of the Maghrib, over Aḥmad al-Akḥal b. Yūsuf al-Kalbī
- 998 Jacob b. Nissim discusses *shōfār* blowing with “scholars of Edom” (= Christian country) in Qayrawān
- 998, November Fragment of a letter from Samuel Gaon b. Hophni to Fustat (48)
- 998, December Riots between Shiites and Sunnis in Baghdad; harsh winter
- 999, May 21 Bādīs campaigns against the Banū Zanāta
- 999, summer Supporters of the Umayyads take Tāhirt
- 999, August 7 Nahum b. Joseph al-Baradānī writes to Samuel b. Hophni from Qayrawān (58)
- 999, October 23 Bādīs victorious over the Banū Zanāta in the battle of Wādī Aghlān
- 1000, February 16 Moses b. Yahyā al-Majjānī writes from Fustat to Yeshūʿa b. Ismaʿīl al-Maghribī, in Rashīd (116)
- 1001, February Letter from Elḥanan b. Shemariah to Sherira and Hayy
- 1001, November Bādīs completes his victory over the Banū Zanāta
- 1002 Riots of the *ʿayyārūn* cause a great deal of damage in Baghdad; many leave the city
- 1004 Hayy b. Sherira becomes gaon of Pumbedita while Sherira is still alive
- 1004, August or September Letter from the gaon Samuel b. Hophni to the brothers Abraham and Tanḥūm, son of Jacob, in Fās (49)
- 1006 Severe riots in Iraq
- 1006, summer Letter from Joseph b. Jacob Ibn ʿAwqal to Hayy Gaon
- 1006, August 11 Letter of Hayy Gaon to Jacob b. Nissim in Qayrawān (37)
- 1006, September 3 Death of Sherira Gaon
- 1006, end of the year Death of Jacob b. Nissim
- 1007, February 5 Letter of Hayy Gaon to the brothers Abraham and Tanḥūm, sons of Jacob, in Fās (38)
- 1007, September 7 Destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem
- 1008, July Letter from Samuel Gaon b. Hophni to a notable of Fustat (55)
- 1008, August 6 Šāliḥ b. Abraham (Barhūn) al-Tāhirtī writes to Joseph Ibn ʿAwkal from Qayrawān (131)
- 1008, October Letter from Samuel Gaon b. Hophni to an *alūf* (50)
- 1009 Death of al-Sijistānī al-Mantiqī, leader of a circle of scholars of various persuasions who participated in discussions together
- 1010 or 1011 Fakhr al-mulk Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Khalaf is appointed as vizier of the Būyids
- 1011 A letter from the anonymous “son of Solomon” to the Tustaris, about his leaving Baghdad (167)
- 1011, February 25 Letter from Moses (Mūsā) b. Yahyā al-Majjānī in Qayrawān to Joseph b. ʿAwkal in Fustat (117)
- 1011, March A query sent by Joseph b. Berekhiah and scholars from the *bēt midrāsh* by Jacob b. Nissim is discussed at the Pumbedita yeshiva
- 1011, July 24 ʿAllūsh b. Yeshūʿa confirms receipt of what was due to him by Ismaʿīl b. Abraham al-Andalusī; signature of Samuel ‘the third’ b. Hoshaʿnā (213)

- 1011, August 3 Samuel (Isma'īl) b. Abraham al-Tāhīrtī writes from Mahdiyya to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat (122)
- 1011, end of December Death of Shemariah b. Elḥanan
- 1012, September 15 Death of Samuel ha-Kohen b. Hophni, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Dōsā b. Saadia
- 1014 Revolt lead by 'Alī b. Yūsuf in Sicily
- 1015, February 1 'Alī b. Yūsuf, leader of the revolt in Sicily, is caught and executed
- 1015, summer War of Bādīs b. al-Manšūr against his uncle Ḥammād b. Buluqqīn; slaughter of Shiites in the Maghrib, which continues into 1016
- 1016, January Court record about a conflict between Ephraim b. Shemariah and 'Amrūn b. Eliah of Palermo
- 1016, May 10 Death of Bādīs, ruler of Ifrīqiyyā
- 1016, June 2 Al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs succeeds his father
- 1017, July 31 War between al-Mu'izz and his father's uncle, Ḥammād b. Buluqqīn, ruler of the Central Maghrib
- 1017, August 26 Victory of Bādīs over Ḥammād
- 1017/18 Death of 'Abdallah b. 'Ubaydallah, Muslim transmitter of traditions, of Jewish origin
- 1018, January Death of Dōsā b. Saadia, gaon of Sura; succeeded by Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Hophni
- 1018, February 7 Hayy Gaon writes to Elḥanan b. Shemariah (39)
- 1019 Uprising in Palermo; Aḥmad al-Akḥal al-Kalbī regains the leadership of the island
- 1019, April Israel Gaon writes to a person in Fustat (62)
- 1020 Ruler of Cochin in India grants rights to Jews
- 1020, April 21 Court record in Syracuse (Sicily) concerning matters of inheritance; oath deposed before the congregation (223)
- 1020, December – 1022, January Letter from Israel Gaon to Solomon ha-Kohen b. Saadia (63)
- 1021 Deed related to Ḥannah b. Israel b. Jacob, of the Tustaris
- 1021, January Israel Gaon requests financial aid (63)
- 1021, February 13 Murder of the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākīm; succeeded by his son, al-Zāhir
- 1022, October Letter from Israel Gaon to an *alūf* (64)
- 1023, March 29 Al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs starts campaign against Khalīfa b. Warrū, leader of the Banū Zanāta
- 1023, October Death of Umm Malāl ('al-Sayyida'), sister of Bādīs
- 1024, September 8 Marriage of al-Sayyida, sister of al-Mu'izz
- 1025 Accounting of sale of flax imported to the Maghrib from Egypt (133, 134)
- 1026, March 4 Ephraim b. Sa'īd writes from Ahwāz to the Tustaris in Fustat
- 1026, July 18 Letter from Hārūn al-Ghazzāl in Alexandria, to Joseph b. Jacob Ibn 'Awkal, in Fustat (174)
- 1027, March 11 Aaron b. Joseph al-Ghazzāl writes from Qayrawān to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat (175)
- 1027, May 4 Ṣadaqa b. 'Ayyāsh writes from Alexandria to Ḥesed b. Yāshār al-Tustarī in Fustat (158)
- 1027, May 19 Letter from Nissim b. Jacob in Qayrawān to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat. Some Tāhīrtīs still remain in the Maghrib (162)

- 1029, May The Palestinian gaon, Solomon b. Judah, mentions monies sent by the Jews of Sicily to Jerusalem
- 1030, April 2 Letter sent by Ephraim b. Isma'īl al-Jawharī in Alexandria, to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat (182)
- 1030, beginning of September Solomon (Salāma) b. Joseph al-Ghazzāl writes from Mahdiyya to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat (177)
- 1030, October 1 Khallūf b. Zechariah writes from Alexandria to Joseph Ibn 'Awkal in Fustat (194)
- 1031, March Plunder of Jewish houses in Baghdad following riots between Shiites and Sunnis
- 1031, November 29 Death of Caliph al-Qādir; succeeded by al-Qā'im
- 1032 Plaque in Mosul
- 1032, August 30 Court record from Qayrawān (143)
- 1033, October 30 Death of Israel ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Hophni, gaon of Sura; succeeded by his son 'Azariah
- 1034, March 14 Court record from Fustat regarding an inheritance (143)
- 1035 The Jews of Sicily send 35 dinars to the Jews of Jerusalem
- 1036 Beginning of Ibn Thumna's battles in Sicily
- 1036 Letter from the exilarch Hezekiah against Elḥanan b. Shemariah
- 1036, May-June Court records from Fustat regarding trade in pearls (799)
- 1036, June Death of Caliph al-Zāhir the Fatimid; succeeded by his son al-Mustansir
- 1036, summer An army of al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs wages war in Sicily
- 1036/7 Al-Mu'izz defeated by the Banū Zanāta, but he prevails afterwards
- 1037, April Letter of Hayy Gaon to Nehemiah *rōsh ha-pereq* b. Abraham in Fustat (40)
- 1037, May 29 *Takhkira* of Hibat Allah b. Khalaf (638)
- 1037, November 12 A conference of Muslim clergy, with the catholicus and the exilarch present, is informed of an order by the caliph renewing the clothing rules for the *dhimmīs*
- 1037, December Hayy Gaon writes to Sahlān b. Abraham in Fustat (41)
- 1038, March 29 Death of Hayy b. Sherira, gaon of Pumbedita
- 1038, summer Accounting of merchandise arriving in Alexandria (357)
- 1038, September 12 Letter of Daniel b. 'Azariah containing information on close relations between Hezekiah and the people of Fustat (Gil *Palest.*, II, 627-630, no. 344)
- 1039 Letter from Ephraim b. Maymūn to Isaac b. 'Alī al-Majjānī (639)
- 1039, June Death of Mūsā b. Yahyā al-Majjānī
- 1040 Letter from the exilarch Hezekiah b. David to Jacob b. 'Amram, nagid of Qayrawān (69)
- 1040, July or August Letter from the exilarch Hezekiah b. David to the congregation of the 'Babylonians' in Fustat (68)
- 1040/41 Sahlān b. Abraham copies the story about Bustanai (2)
- 1041, May A *rōsh kallā* from Mosul arrives in Ramla
- 1041, summer Beginning of war, which will last two years, between al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs and al-Qā'id b. Hammād
- 1041/2 Al-Mu'izz b. Bādīs accepts the legitimacy of the Abbasids

- 1042 Court record in Fustat about a conflict between merchants (632)
- 1043, November 26 Court record in Fustat about a libel made by Zabyān ha-Kohen b. Saadia concerning the Perahiah Family, that they stem from slaves
- 1045 The exilarch Hezekiah b. David is mentioned by Jerahmeel, who copied *sefer ʿōlām zūṭā*
- 1045, February 4 Letter of Yahyā b. Mūsā al-Majjānī (628)
- 1045, August 4 Letter from ʿAyyāsh b. Šedāqā in Alexandria, to Nehorai b. Nissim; mention of Ḥesed al-Tustarī
- 1045/6 Plunder of Jewish houses in Baghdad, following a conflict between Sunnis and Shiites
- 1046 Accounting of Nehorai b. Nissim (273, 274)
- 1046 Record of testimony regarding the bequest of Mūsā b. ʿAllūsh (821)
- 1046 Letter from Nissim b. Ḥalfon, in Tinnīs, to Nehorai b. Nissim (582)
- 1046 Letter from Benaiah b. Mūsā, in Tinnīs, to Nehorai b. Nissim; drought in the Delta (602)
- 1046, June 22 Letter from Mardūkh b. Mūsā in Fustat to Nehorai b. Nissim, with details about ships (528)
- 1046, July 21 Letter from Mardūkh b. Mūsā in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim concerning transports of merchandise (531)
- 1046, August 10 Letter from Mardūkh b. Mūsā in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim; ships from Mahdiyya reach Alexandria (529)
- 1046, August 20 Letter from Nissim b. Ḥalfon, in Tinnīs, mentions the exilarch Hezekiah and his son, David (583)
- 1046, October 23 Letter from Abū'l-Ḥayy b. Barhūn b. Mūsā concerning matters of maritime transports, shipwreck (443)
- 1046, November 17 Letter from Nissim b. Ḥalfon concerning ruin of his house (585)
- 1046, December 15 Claims made by Joseph b. Mūsā about a matter of coins (822)
- 1047 Drought; severe plague in northern Iraq
- 1047, January 3 Letter from Mardūkh b. Mūsā in Alexandria; purchase of a slave girl (532)
- 1047, June 28 News of a severe plague in all of Iraq
- 1047, July 10 Letter from Mardūkh b. Mūsā in Alexandria (533)
- 1047, October 25 Murder of Abraham b. Yāshār al-Tustarī
- 1047, November 22 Letter from ʿAṭā' b. ʿAmmār to Nehorai b. Nissim, sale of books; Nehorai's lodging (776)
- 1047/8 Death of al-Ḥasan b. David b. Bābshādh, Muslim scholar of Jewish origin
- 1048, January 10 Letter of Mardūkh b. Mūsā, from Alexandria: dispatch of dinars to Egypt (534)
- 1048, January 26 Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī and Mardūkh b. Mūsā write from Mahdiyya to Nehorai: the matter of the Tustaris; purchase of paper (379, 535)
- 1048, March 8 Letter from Mardūkh b. Mūsā in Alexandria (536)
- 1048, July 26 Letter from Mardūkh b. Mūsā in Alexandria: matter of pilgrimage to Palestine (537)

- 1048, September Letter from Zechariah b. Gedaliah b. °Ayyāsh in Šahrajt; worries about Qayrawān; matters of textiles (718)
- 1048/9 Al-Mu°izz b. Bādīs, ruler of Ifrīqiya, secedes from Egyptian rule
- 1049 Accounting of Nehorai b. Nissim: pearls, beads (275)
- 1049, July 27 Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī writes to Nehorai b. Nissim: business in the Maghrib as usual; ship of al-°Arūs wrecked; difficulties in Egypt (380)
- 1049, October 21 Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī writes from Mahdiyya to °Ayyāsh b. Šedāqā; mention of Ḥesed b. Yāshār al-Tustarī (381)
- 1049/50 The °ayyārūn take control of the west bank in Baghdad; riots between Shiites and Sunnis; emigration from Iraq
- 1050, February 1 Aaron b. Yāshār al-Tustarī released from prison
- 1050, May 27 Letter from °Ayyāsh b. Šedāqā in Alexandria: maritime transport; fire in Alexandria (485)
- 1050, summer Letter from °Ayyāsh b. Šedāqā in Alexandria, after the murder of Ḥesed al-Tustarī; maritime transports (484)
- 1050, October 22 Letters from Farah b. Isma°l in Alexandria; financial matters (499, 500)
- 1050, November 19 Letter from Farah b. Isma°l in Alexandria; commercial matters (501)
- 1051 Accounting of Nehorai b. Nissim (277)
- 1051, January Letter of °Ayyāsh b. Šedāqā in Alexandria; complaints of difficulties in trade (486)
- 1051, January or February Jizya receipt for Abraham b. Sanbāt
- 1051, April 6 Letter from Nehorai b. Nissim to Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī; transports from Rashīd to Fustat (247)
- 1051, April 6 Letter from Nehorai b. Nissim to Mūsā b. Barhūn al-Tāhīrtī; warships hinder transport of goods (248)
- 1051, July 31 Letter from Mevorakh b. Israel Janūnī in Palermo; matters of maritime transport (755)
- 1051, August Letter from Barhūn b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī to Nehorai b. Nissim; matters of maritime transport (382)
- 1051, September Letter from Joshua b. Nathan al-Andalusī in Bahnasā to Nehorai b. Nissim: flax, wheat, oil (579)
- 1051, September 3 Letter from Nissim b. Isaac al-Tāhīrtī in Mahdiyya (?) to Mūsā b. Abī°l Ḥayy: commercial matters (392)
- 1051, September 6 Letter from Nissim b. Isaac in Sūsā; matters of maritime transport; about Sicily (393)
- 1051, September 8 Letter from Khalaf (Khallūf) b. Mūsā in Mahdiyya; some important event happened in the city; trade with Spain (581)
- 1051, September 29 Letter from Joshua b. Nathan, from the Rīf; commercial matters (580)
- 1052 Manasseh b. David copies a halachic text
- 1052, beginning of year Anonymous letter from Alexandria: commercial dispute with a Muslim; invasion of the Banū Qurra and the °abīd (slaves); (816)
- 1052, March 29 Deed of attorney, Mahdiyya; claiming a debt against Ḥesed al-Tustarī (649)
- 1052, April Deed from Fustat; matters of checks and trade (665)

- 1052, April Letter from Yeshū^a b. Isma^ʿl al-Makhmūrī to Khalaf (Khallūf) b. Mūsā; matters concerning imports; matters of Sicily (317)
- 1052, May 1 Letter from Abraham b. Farrāḥ in Alexandria, with a *suftaja* (544)
- 1052, May 12 Addition to a letter from Yeshū^a b. Isma^ʿl al-Makhmūrī to Khalaf (Khallūf) b. Mūsā; maritime disasters (318)
- 1052, July 31 Letter from Mevorakh b. Israel Janūnī, from Palermo; matters of maritime transport (755)
- 1052, August Letters from Yaḥyā b. ʿAlī b. Joseph Kohen Fāsī, from Qayrawān; roads insecure, lapse of security (404, 405)
- 1053 Tamīm b. al-Mu^ʿizz appointed as governor of Mahdiyya
- 1053, February 8 Letter from Nehorai b. Nissim to Būšīr about purchase of flax (250)
- 1053, February 9 Letter from Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī: collection of debts (345)
- 1053, August 29 Letter from Abraham b. Farrāḥ to Nehorai b. Nissim; matters of transportation; the situation in Ifrīqiyā and in Sicily is excellent; wheat is cheap in Egypt (545)
- 1053/4 Uprising in Sūsa
- 1053, beginning of year Letter from Salmān b. Hārūn and his partners in Alexandria, to Nehorai b. Nissim: collection of debts in Fustat; mention of Ibn al-Ba^ʿbā^ʿ (771)
- 1054, February 11 Nehorai b. Nissim writes from Būšīr; matters of flax, business in Fustat; silk in Sicily (257)
- 1054, March 22 Letter from Mūsā b. Jacob al-Miṣrī in Taṭāi to Joseph b. David b. Sha^ʿyā; commercial matters (680)
- 1054, summer Norman invasion of Sicily begins
- 1054, June 1 Letter from Barhūn b. Mūsā to Nehorai b. Nissim; transports of goods; movement of ships; details about coins (347)
- 1054, June 20-21 Letters from Abraham b. Farrāḥ in Alexandria; matters of maritime transport; import of wine; serious events; movements of refugees (547, 548)
- 1055 Plunder, destruction and ruin in Iraqi localities following the Saljūq invasion
- 1055 Death of Samuel b. Joseph Ibn Naghrila, the Spanish nagid
- 1055 Accounting of Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhīrtī (354)
- 1055, January 31 Letter from Mūsā b. Ya^ʿqūb in Damascus; commercial matters (681)
- 1055, March Incursion of al-Basāsīrī into the al-Anbār district; Fālūja torched
- 1055, April 7 A deed of receipt by Judah b. Moses Ibn Sughmār to a Sicilian (618)
- 1055, July 24 Act of court in Fustat: power of attorney; Qayrawān is still populated (818)
- 1055, December 22 Letter from Joseph b. Farah to his nephew; family news; an expeditionary army from Ifrīqiyā to Sicily; famine in Fustat (515)
- end of 1055 or beginning of 1056 Death of *rabbēnū* Hananel b. Ḥushiel

- 1056 Beginning of invasion of the Maghrib by Arab tribes from Egypt
- 1056, summer Letter from Labrāt b. Moses b. Sughmār in Sūsa; internal wars in the Maghrib; Sūsa under siege (**612, 613**)
- 1056, summer Death of Yaḥyā b. Mūsā Ibn al-Majjānī (**632**)
- 1056, summer Norman invasion of Sicily continues
- 1056, June 5 Letter from Farāḥ b. Ismaʿīl to Nehorai b. Nissim; difficult situation in Sicily (**503**)
- 1056, August 9 Letter from Labrāt b. Moses b. Sughmār in Sūsa: grave events (**614**)
- 1056, August 18 Letter from Maymūn b. Khalifa in Palermo, to Nehorai b. Nissim: the extraordinary tax (*ʿissūr*); the *dayyān* Maṣliāḥ b. Eliah is imprisoned (**561**)
- 1056, August 25 Letter from Abraham b. Farrāḥ to Nehorai b. Nissim: details of maritime transports (**552**)
- 1056, September 2 Letter from Ḥayyim b. ʿAmmār in Palermo; matters of maritime transports; serious situation in Sūsa (**650**)
- 1056, September 6 Letter from Joseph b. Farāḥ in Alexandria to Farāḥ b. Ismaʿīl; Ibn Thumna's men attack commercial ships (**513**)
- 1056, September 9 Letter from Ismaʿīl b. Farāḥ in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim; serious events in Sūsa following invasion by Bedouin (**488**)
- 1056, September 11 Letter from Ismaʿīl b. Farāḥ in Alexandria to his son Farāḥ; people in Sicily take flight (**489**)
- 1056, September 23 Letters from Ismaʿīl b. Farāḥ in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim and to Ismaʿīl's son Farāḥ: commercial matters; grave events in Sicily (**490, 491**)
- 1056, September 25 Letter from Ismaʿīl b. Farāḥ in Alexandria; marriage of Nehorai b. Nissim (**492**)
- 1056, October 1 Letter from Abraham b. Farrāḥ in Alexandria to Ye-shūʿā b. Ismaʿīl; commercial ties with Sicily (**553**)
- 1056, October 8 Letter from Farāḥ b. Ismaʿīl from Būṣīr; purchase of flax (**504**)
- 1056, October 25 Letter from Joseph b. Farāḥ in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim; dispatches of dinars; movements of ships (**514**)
- 1056, October 29 Letter from Ismaʿīl b. Farāḥ in Alexandria; movement of ships, including to Sicily; news about the drought (**493**)
- 1056, November Letter from Ismaʿīl b. Farāḥ in Alexandria; movement of ships and transports of goods, including to Sicily; details about the drought and a severe plague (**494, 495**)
- 1056, December 22 Letter from Joseph b. Farāḥ in Fustat: about the expeditionary force to Sicily; grave famine in Egypt (**515**)
- 1056/7 Persecution of *dhimmīs* in Baghdad
- 1056/7 Accounting of Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī for his partner (**356**)
- 1057
- 1057, June 23 Letter from Jacob b. Salmān from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim: imports of dates; financial matters; matters of taxes (**663**)

- 1057, June 27 Letter from Joseph b. °Alī Kohen Fāsī in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim; maritime transports; imports; details about coins (396)
- 1057, July 30 Letter from Labrāt b. Moses in Mahdiyya; the war fleet besieges Sūsa (615)
- 1057, August 3 Letter from Labrāt b. Moses in Mahdiyya to Nehorai b. Nissim; mention of Nehorai's eye disease; responsum of Hayy Gaon about a matter of inheritance; gravity of the situation in Sicily (616)
- 1057, August 26 Parts of Baghdad torched, including a synagogue
- 1057, September 14 Letter from Ezra b. Hillel in Alexandria; coins withdrawn from circulation in Alexandria; matter of maritime transports (773)
- 1057, October 29 Al-Mu°izz b. Bādīs abandons Qayrawān
- 1057, November 1 Qayrawān plundered by the Banū Hilāl
- 1058 Accounting of Nehorai b. Nissim, trade in precious stones and other goods; dispatches of money (282, 283, 837, 838)
- 1058, January 9 Letter from Labrāt b. Moses in Mahdiyya; maritime disaster; matters of Sicily; Qayrawān abandoned; things in Mahdiyya are normal (617)
- 1058, November Ibn Sukra al-Hāshimī incites the populace in Baghdad against the *dhimmīs*
- 1059 Rebellion against al-Mu°izz in Safāqūṣ
- 1059 Accounting of the partnership between Nehorai b. Nissim and Barhūn and Joseph, sons of Mūsā al-Tāhīrī (287)
- 1059 Letter from Isaac b. °Alī al-Majjānī in Mahdiyya (637)
- 1059, summer Fragment of a letter from Mūsā b. Isaac al-Safāqūṣī, apparently in Māzar (746)
- 1059, August 25 Letter from Solomon (Salāma) b. Mūsā in Alexandria; matters of Safāqūṣ (747)
- 1059, September 7 Letter from Mūsā b. Isaac Safāqūṣī in Safāqūṣ to Judah b. Moses b. Sughmār; matters of Safāqūṣ; dispatches of gold from the Maghrib to Egypt (748)
- 1060 Accounting of Nehorai b. Nissim (289)
- 1060, December 7 Letter from Nissim b. Ḥalfōn in Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim: commercial matters (596)
- 1061 Accounting of Nehorai b. Nissim (294, 295)
- 1061, October 19 Death of al-Mu°izz b. Bādīs, ruler of Ifrīqiyyā; succeeded by his son Abū'l-Tāhir Tamīm
- 1061, December 18 Letter from Ṣālīḥ b. Bahlūl, apparently in Mahdiyya, to Nehorai b. Nissim (781)
- 1062 Epidemic of *judarī* (smallpox) in Egypt
- 1062, beginning of March Murder of Ibn Thumna, ruler of Sicily
- 1062, summer Letter from al-Safāqūṣī from Alexandria; tense situation in Alexandria (749)
- 1062, summer Bill of lading, mainly of textiles (564)
- 1062, summer Death of °Ammār b. °Izrūn, a Sicilian leader
- 1062, July Letter from Yeshū°ā b. Samuel (Isma°īl) in Alexandria: the death of Nissim b. Jacob, probably on July 18 (312)
- 1062, August A record mentions the *heqdēsh* (pious foundation) in Palermo (319)

- 1062, August Letter from Zechariah b. Jacob b. Shemariah (al-Shāma) in Ṭarābulus in Libya: dispatches of goods and money (668)
- 1062, August Letter from Šālīh b. Bahlūl, apparently from Mahdiyya: ruin of the Maghrib; news about the Tāhirtīs; death of Barhūn b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī (782; mentioned also in 374, see below)
- 1062, August 9 Letter from Judah b. Ismaʿīl in Sicily to Nehorai b. Nissim: exports from Sicily (578)
- 1062, August 12 Letter from Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl to Nehorai b. Nissim: details on the situation in Sicily; the death of Nissim b. Jacob (312)
- 1062, November 28 Letter from Mūsā b. Abī'l-Ḥayy to Nehorai b. Nissim, after a stay in Jerusalem (449)
- 1063, January 1 Letter from Manasseh in Damsīs, to Akhlābū ha-Kohen: plague in Fustat (758)
- 1063, February 2 Letter from Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī in Mahdiyya to Yeshūʿā b. Ismaʿīl: details of a maritime disaster; tension in Sicily (372)
- 1063, June 30 Deed from Mahdiyya, signed by Judah al-Ṭabīb b. Saadia (the *nagid*) and Joseph b. Farah al-Qābisī
- 1063, August 3 Letter from Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī in Mahdiyya to Yeshūʿā b. Samuel (Ismaʿīl): transports of goods; a case of bankruptcy (373)
- 1063, autumn Letter from Joseph b. Mūsā al-Tāhirtī in Mahdiyya: details of transports of goods; announces the death of his brother Barhūn (374)
- 1063, December 28 Letter from Ezra b. Hillel in Alexandria: medicinal plants; commerce is normal, (774)
- 1064 Bedouin from the Safāqūs region attack Mahdiyya
- 1064, April 20 Anonymous letter from Alexandria to Nehorai b. Nissim: commercial matters; the situation in the Maghrib is good (828)
- 1064, end of summer Ships laden with cargo owned by Jewish merchants, anchored off Sicily, are torched (751, Gil, *Hist.*, 208, 229)
- 1064, September 7 Letters from Salāma b. Mūsā al-Safāqūsī in Māzar; war between the sultan of Mahdiyya and the *qā'id* of Safāqūs; Salāma intends to move to Sicily (751, 752)
- 1065 Ibn Baʿbāʿ is in Ifrīqiyyā on a mission for the Fatimids
- 1065 Tamīm b. al-Muʿizz' victory over Nāṣir b. Ḥammād
- 1065 Accounting of Nehorai b. Nissim (296)
- 1065, August Letter from ʾĀvōn b. Šedāqā in Jerusalem to Nehorai b. Nissim (Gil, *Palest.*, no. 501)
- 1065, end of year Accounting and letter from Zechariah b. Jacob b. Shemariah in Ṭarābulus, Libya (669)
- 1066 Accounting of Nissim b. Ḥalfōn (600)
- 1066, March 21 Act of Court concerning matters of an inheritance in Fustat (823)
- 1066, June 11 Letter from Abraham b. Farrāh in Alexandria: matters of Sicily; maritime transports; lack of wheat (556)
- 1066, December 30 Slaughter of Jews in Granada; Joseph (Yehōsēf) the *nagid* is killed
- 1068, January 30 Letter from Judah ha-Kohen b. Joseph (*ha-rāv*) about books (844)

- 1068, February 12 Deed of Fustat; trade in saffron (**800**)
 1068, August 25 Letter from Mevasser b. David in Tinnīs to Nehorai b. Nissim; siege of Mahdiyya; matters are intricate in Sa-fāquš; Ibn Ba^cbā^c arrived in Alexandria (**695**)
- 1068, December 28 Death of brother of Ibn Faḍlān *al-yahūdī*, probably Abū ‘Alī b. Faḍlān *al-yahūdī*, money-changer
- 1069 Journal of ‘Alī b. al-Bannā’ (see the bibliographical index [Arabic]: Ibn al-Bannā’)
- 1069 Intervention of Tamīm b. al-Mu‘izz in Sicily
- 1069, February Dispute in Baghdad over the exilarchate
- 1069, May Bedouin attempt to murder Ibn Faḍlān, Jewish financier of Baghdad
- 1069, May 4 Two letters mention Ibn al-Ba^cbā^c’s taking control of Sicily (**519, 520**)
- 1069/70 Famine in Egypt
- 1071/2 Riots against Jews and Christians in Baghdad
- 1072, January 10 Palermo taken by the Normans
- 1072, July 5 Deathbed will of Maymūn b. Khalfā (**565**)
- 1075, April 3 Death of Caliph al-Qā’im; succeeded by al-Muqtadī
- 1076, April 12 Deed of Court, Alexandria: settling the debt of a member of the Ibn ‘Awkal family (**844**)
- 1079, November 14 Letter from Nathan b. Nehorai in Alexandria, to Mūsā b. Abī’l-Ḥayy (**436**)
- 1079/80 The Jewish tax farmer, Abraham Ibn ‘Allān, drowned by order of Sultan Malikshāh
- 1080/91 Riots in Baghdad of Ḥanbalīs against Jews and Christians, following the conversion to Islam of a group of Jews and Christians
- 1084, August 5 Letter from Mūsā b. Abī’l-Ḥayy in Būšīr to ‘Arūs b. Joseph (**468**)
- 1085, March 2 Power of attorney from Alexandria (**623**)
- 1090, September Deathbed will of Yeshū‘ā b. Isma‘īl al-Makhmūrī (**327**)
- 1090, October or November Abraham (‘Arūs) b. Joseph purchases a Christian female slave with her son from a Christian *kātib*, Ḥanūn b. ‘Allūn
- 1091, April 7 Caliph al-Muqtadī renews the decrees regarding clothing of the *dhimmīs*
- 1091, July 4 Letter from Abraham ha-Kohen, gaon of Palestine, mentions Sura and Pumbedita and the exilarch Hezekiah
- 1092, April or May Makīkhā is appointed as catholicus by Caliph al-Muqtadī
- 1094 Mention of the synagogue in Palermo
- 1094, February 4 Death of Caliph al-Muqtadī; succeeded by al-Mustazhir
- 1094, April-May Messianic movement; Jews of Iraq believe in imminent flight to Palestine
- 1094, July 9 Letter from Nathan b. Nehorai in Alexandria; joy over Mevorakh b. Saadia’s return to the position of nagid (**431**)
- 1096, March 10 Letter from Nathan b. Nehorai in Alexandria to Mūsā b. Abī’l-Ḥayy (**432**)
- 1097 A member of the Ibn Sughmār family mentions the India trade (**625**)

1098, March 11	Deed of Fustat mentions Nehorai b. Nissim with the blessing for the deceased
1104/5	The decree concerning discriminating signs on the clothing of <i>dhimmīs</i> is abolished
ca. 1105	Obadiah the proselyte is in Baghdad
1108, July	Large fire in the Jewish quarter of Baghdad
1108, November 10	Deed of sale; Nehorai b. Nissim's widow sells a female slave (303)
1113, December	Exilarch Ḥisdai b. David is mentioned in a Damascus deed of sale
1113/14	Ibn Abī Shujā ^c , who is Rabīb al-dawla Abū Maṣṣūr al-Husayn, is appointed as vizier in Iraq
1116/17	Houses and synagogues (as well as churches?) in Baghdad are torched
1118, August 6	Death of Caliph al-Mustazhir, succeeded by al-Mustarshid
1120	Details of decrees against Baghdad's Jews
1131, July	Renewal of decrees on <i>dhimmīs'</i> clothing
1135	<i>Dhimmīs</i> are removed from public offices
1135, April 25	Mention of Exilarch Daniel b. Ḥisdai in a colophon on a book of his (92)
1135, August 29	Death of Caliph al-Mustarshid, succeeded by al-Rāshid
1136, August 19	Death of Caliph al-Rāshid, succeeded by al-Muqtafi
1138, December	Writ of appointment of the Nestorian catholicus in Baghdad
1141, end of summer	Issac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra leaves Egypt for Iraq
1142, November 2	Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Ezra is in ʿUmariyya (Jazīrat Ibn ʿUmar)
1143	Abū'l-Barakāt writes a commentary to Ecclesiastes
1145	Renewal of decrees on clothing; plot to expel Jews from Baghdad
1145/6	Anti-Jewish decrees in Iraq
1149/50	Abū'l-Barakāt Hibat Allah b. ʿAlī Ibn Malkā serves as physician to Sayf al-dīn Ghāzī b. Zangī, ruler of Mosul
1152, February	Letter from the Baghdadian gaon Solomon to an unidentified community
1154	Death of Ḥiyyā b. al-Daʿūdī in Castilia
1156	The Tigris overflows its banks and inundates many localities
1157, August 9	Earthquake ruins Tripoli in Syria
1160, March 12	Death of Caliph al-Muqtafi; succeeded by al-Mustanjid
1161	Abraham Ibn Daʿūd writes the <i>sefer ha-qabbālā</i>
1161, October	Letter from Exilarch Daniel b. Ḥisdai in Baghdad, to Nethanel ha-Levi b. Moses in Fustat
1163, November 8	Samawāl b. Yaḥyā al-Maghribī sees the Prophet Muḥammad in a dream and decides to convert to Islam
ca. 1165	Death of Abū'l-Barakāt Hibat Allah b. ʿAlī b. Malkā
1165, August	Fragment of a deed from Fustat mentions Exilarch Daniel b. Ḥisdai
ca. 1166	Benjamin of Tudela's journey begins
1166, April	Responsum of the gaon Samuel b. Eli
1166, October	Fragment of a letter by the gaon Samuel b. Eli (75)

- 1167, June 6 The exilarch Daniel b. Ḥisdai is mentioned in a *ketubbā* from Fustat
- 1168 Benjamin of Tudela is in Iraq
- 1170, June Conquest of Raqqa, Khābūr, Nisibis, by Nūr al-dīn; he lays siege to Sinjār and conquers it
- 1170, June 28 Strong earthquake in northern Syria
- 1170, December 20 Death of Caliph al-Mustaḍī; succeeded by al-Mustaḍī
- 1174, August Death of Samawāl b. Yahyā al-Maghribī
- 1175 Death of the exilarch Daniel b. Ḥisdai
- 1176 Petahiah of Regensburg visits Baghdad
- 1176, April Fragment of a letter from the gaon Samuel b. Eli (76)
- 1177/8 Destruction of the synagogue in Madā'in, which is Māhōzē; anti-Jewish riots in Baghdad
- 1179 Messianic movement in Iṣfahān
- 1180, March 30 Death of Caliph al-Mustaḍī; succeeded by al-Nāṣir
- 1180 Journey of Ibn Jubayr in Iraq
- 1184, October Responsum of the gaon Samuel b. Eli
- 1186, October or November The gaon Samuel b. Eli writes to a community
- 1190 ca. 200 *dhimmīs* in Baghdad convert to Islam
- 1190, October Letter from Maimonides to Joseph Ibn ʿAqnīn, with complaints about the gaon Samuel b. Eli and Zekhariah b. Berakhel
- 1191 The gaon Samuel b. Eli writes to the communities of Syria concerning the precarious situation of the yeshiva, and criticises the exilarchs
- 1191, February The gaon Samuel b. Eli writes to the community of Damascus
- 1191, July The gaon Samuel b. Eli informs the people of Ḥalab that Zekhariah b. Berakhel was appointed *av-bēt-dīn* of the yeshiva
- 1191, October 21 Maimonides defends the exilarch who was criticised by Samuel b. Eli
- 1192 Mention of the exilarch Daniel b. Hōdāyā
- 1193, May The authorities appoint ʿAbdallah b. Abī'l-Riḍā as head of the Jews in Damascus
- 1193, September Letter from the gaon Samuel b. Eli to the community of Irbil
- 1194, March Letters of Zekhariah b. Berakhel to the communities; he serves as *rōsh yeshivā* in Baghdad while Samuel b. Eli is still alive
- 1195, May or June Funerary inscription of Abū'l-Riḍā Saadia ha-Levi b. ʿAlī, a Baghdadi physician
- 1197 Funerary inscription of the Fallūja area: ʿIzz al-nisā' b. Israel b. Yefet
- 1197 Funerary monument of Abū Maṣṣūr Aaron ha-Kohen b. Samuel b. Abī'l-Rabīʿ (brother of Daniel?)
- 1197, May Letter from Raqqa to Fustat (90)
- 1197, May Letter of appointment of the *shammāsh* of the Ezra the Scribe synagogue (91)
- end of 1197 or 1198 Death of Samuel b. Eli
- 1201 Funerary inscription of the Fallūja area: Sitt al-Ḥukamā' b. Sar Shālōm, the physician

1201, April-May	Letter of appointment of the <i>shammāsh</i> (son of the previous one, see under May 1197) of the Ezra the Scribe synagogue by the gaon Daniel b. Eleazar (91)
1205, January –	Letters from the gaon Daniel b. Eleazar to communities
1205, May 21	Death of “the head of the Jews”, Abū Ṭāhir Joseph Ibn Shibr, money-changer at the <i>dīwān</i> of al- ^c Azīz, in Baghdad; buried on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem
1209, May 15	Death of the Baghdadi gaon Daniel b. Eleazar b. Hibat Allah
1225, October 5	Death of Caliph al-Nāṣir; succeeded by al-Zāhir
1226, July 11	Death of Caliph al-Zāhir; succeeded by al-Mustanṣir
1228/9	Complaint of the <i>qāḍī</i> Ibn Faḍlān, in his letter to Caliph al-Mustanṣir, about the comfortable life of the <i>dhimmīs</i> in Baghdad
1229/30	The <i>qāḍī</i> Ibn Faḍlān mistreats the <i>jizya</i> payers
1230/31	A Jew who converted to Islam and returned to Judaism is crucified in Baghdad
1235, March 10	Writ of ban, by the <i>nāsī</i> Josiah b. Jesse
1236, December	Letter mentioning the Mongols taking control of the Mosul area; details about the state of the houses of the <i>nesī'im</i> (93)
1237, April 28	Letter from Jalāl al-dawla: details of the ruin of houses in Mosul (95)
1238	A deed from Fustat mentions the <i>nāsī</i> Solomon b. Jesse
1239/40	Anti-Jewish riots in Bukhārā
1242, December 5	Death of Caliph al-Mustanṣir; succeeded by al-Musta ^c ṣim
1244, February-March	People of Damīra hire draught animals to transport the <i>nāsī</i> Josiah
1244, June	Mention of the <i>nāsī</i> Solomon b. Jesse
1248, spring	Official appointment by the authorities of the Baghdadi gaon Daniel b. Samuel b. Abū'l-Rab ^c
1250/51	The grandson of the vizier, ^c Alī b. Abū'l-Faṭḥ b. Abū'l-Faraj, murders a Jewish money-changer and his wife
1254, January 10	The <i>nāsī</i> Jesse b. Solomon writes to his father (101)
1258, February 10	Conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols
1275, February 6	Joseph ha-Kohen b. ^c Alī b. Aaron completes the translation of Maimonides' “Guide for the Perplexed”
1283/4	Sa ^c d al-dawla, a Jew, is appointed by the Mongol ruler, Arghūn, as official of the state
1284/5	Exchange of letters between Ibn al-Fuwaṭī and Sa ^c d b. Manṣūr Ibn Kammūna
1285, June	Plunder of the Jewish quarter of Baghdad
1285, August 7	Seth b. Yefet (a Karaite) completes his commentary to the Pentateuch, <i>hem'at ha-hemda</i>
1288, April	The exilarch David b. Daniel writes to Solomon Petit b. Samuel, who criticised Maimonides' “Guide for the Perplexed”
1289	The Jew Sa ^c d al-dawla heads the Mongol state administration

- 1289 Isaac (Naṣr) b. al-Māsha^ʿīrī is appointed governor of Baghdad and Iraq, together with Fakhr al-dawla, Sa^ʿd al-dawla's brother
- 1291, March 3 Murder of Sa^ʿd al-dawla
- 1298 Mention of Rashīd al-dīn, aide to the vizier Ṣadr al-dīn Zanjānī; later Rashīd al-dīn will be leader of the Mongol state
- 1306/7 Evidence on the genealogy of the exilarch Daniel b. David
- 1318, November 14 Execution of Rashīd al-dīn
- 1336 A tract on a polemic between a monk and the exilarch, in the city of Marw
- 1341 Mention of the *nesī'im* ʿAzariah b. Yehalalēl b. ʿAzariah and Sar Shālōm b. Pinḥās b. Hōdāyā b. Josiah
- 1353 The *nāsī* Nafīs b. Da'ūd converts to Islam
- 1376 Writ of ban by the *nāsī* David b. Hōdāyā in the matter of Samuel of Schlettstadt, also signed by the *nāsī* Yedidiah b. Jesse
- 1388 Mention of the *nāsī* Solomon b. Jesse

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